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The Mennonite

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January 4, 2005

A young member of
Christ Community Church,
Des Moines, Iowa

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6 A haven of healing

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2 A watershed year

Whole-life discipleship

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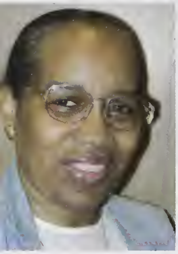
Unity or desolation and defeat



Elaine Bryant is pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."—Matthew 12:25 NKJV

Some sayings associated with the Hip-Hop culture can be associated with sayings or truths in Scripture. One is, "Keep it real," which reminds me of "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

What do these sayings have to do with the truth expressed by the Lord Jesus in the above verse from Matthew? Not only is our nation dangerously divided over several issues, but those of us in the church of Jesus Christ—including those of us who call ourselves Mennonites—are dangerously divided as well. In view of our Lord's words, trying to ignore or deny the division puts us—as a nation and as a denomination—in danger of desolation and defeat by and before the enemies that come "to steal, kill and destroy." Inasmuch as the Lord Jesus is the embodiment of God's love, his words were spoken in love.

Acting as if division doesn't need to be dealt with is comparable to acting as if a malignant tumor or a blocked coronary artery doesn't need to be treated as soon as possible.

Since the Lord's words present a truth to be reckoned with, acting as if division doesn't need to be dealt with is comparable to acting as if a malignant tumor or a blocked coronary artery doesn't need to be treated as soon as possible.

Those pretending, procrastinating or prevaricating—with themselves or others—are not offering real healing, help or hope. The diseases and division need to be openly acknowledged, properly addressed and appropriately acted against. For malignancies and arterial blockages there are guidelines that have been discovered to be helpful in arresting the diseases' death-dealing potential.

"Keeping it real" and "speaking the truth in love" suggest guidelines for offering healing, help and hope in preventing further division, destruction and defeat—for the church and the nation. As members of the church of Jesus Christ, we need to be real (i.e. honest) in acknowledging the truth about while lovingly addressing and acting in regard to the continuing issues that are dividing us. Prayer is a means of appropriating God's grace, i.e. having God meeting us at our points of need in the person of Jesus Christ, including all his power and provision for healing, help and hope.

Some have prayed, and continue to pray, something similar to the following:

Father-God (or God of Grace and Glory), I acknowledge that we are divided in regard to abortion, being antiracist, biblical interpretation, homosexual activity, church polity, management of the resources that you have entrusted to us, military involvement, partisan politics and prophetic efforts to influence government. Such division indicates that we have missed or are missing the mark, i.e. we have sinned or are sinning, and this sets us up for desolation and defeat. In the name of the Lord Jesus, I ask that you forgive us, individually and corporately. Help us see, as you do in regard to your will for us individually and corporately, about these issues and others. Help us bring our hearts, attitudes, behaviors, ideas, thinking, selves and verbalizations in line with what you know to be right, real, necessary, good and appropriate for the manifestation and proclamation of your kingdom and your righteousness in this nation. Amen.

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Holy migrations

I would like to encourage what I call holy migration between area Mennonite churches. I'm not sure where and when it has ever been tried, but my thinking about this was jump-started by two requests from our sibling congregations.

Marilyn Miller, conference minister for Peace Mennonite Community Church in Aurora, Colo., contacted all nearby Mennonite churches with the request that if there are any who would like to attend Peace Mennonite for a while, or even long-term, as a way of supporting that congregation-in-transition, they would be most welcome. Similarly, Phyllis Tribbey, pastor at Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church, has made an appeal especially for young adults to join their congregation. They are a small progressive-liberal congregation in northwest Denver that has a history of involvement with peace and justice activity.

Why shouldn't we expand this concept more broadly to encourage holy migrations as people feel so moved? Smaller congregations could use support, and some folks may enjoy the small-church journey. I think it is legitimate and highly important for folks to find a congregation that is the best fit for them, a place in which they find they can make a joyful and wholehearted contribution.*—Kathrine Rempel, Littleton, Colo.*

God names himself

Although I appreciated all of the fine work in the Dec. 7 issue of *The Mennonite*, my special appreciation goes out to Karl Landis for his excellent article, "God Names Himself" (Speaking Out). I have been contending for years that the problem with using the name Father and other male appellations for the Trinity is not with the name itself; it is with what the name has become associated. Perhaps in an unintended borrowing from Roman Catholicism, we have associated male terminology concerning God with a system of male domination and oppression. But the Father whom Jesus describes in Luke 15 is a Father who seeks after sheep and coins and lost sons with a fervor that defies human description.

If all Christian men displayed such love and care for all in their lives as the Heavenly Father shows for all of his creation, would the idea of Father have such a bad name in our denomination, or the church worldwide? I think not. So thank you, Karl, for pointing out that our Lord Jesus Christ used the term Father for God because that is what he meant to use, not because patriarchal gospel writers distorted his meaning. The distortion is not in whom God the Father is; it is in what "Father" has been warped to mean.*—John Hockman, Topeka, Ind.*

Haunting questions

Here are some questions that continue to haunt us: (1) Are we not, as Christians of Mennonite persuasion, to pattern our lives after Christ's example? We find it difficult, if not impossible, to understand how "believers" can give their blessing to killing. Can you imagine Jesus toting an assault rifle and urging his followers to kill enemies? (2) Is it right for a "Christian nation" to start a war in which more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians, including thousands of children, have lost their lives? We're sending thousands to a Christless grave. (3) Doesn't Jesus enjoin us to love our enemies and let them bring out the best in us, not the worst? (4) Do we subscribe to the Great Commission (Mark 16:18), or is that old fashioned? (5) How acceptable is it for our "Christian" president to forcefully declare that he will "hunt down and kill" our enemies? (6) If Saddam could be converted, wouldn't he make a wonderful modern-day apostle Paul? (7) Why can't we pray, "God, bless Iraq and other countries where there is great danger and suffering"?*—Gene and Ruby Weaver, Apex, N.C.*

Stories are more helpful

The Nov. 16 issue of *The Mennonite* just arrived at the London Mennonite Center, and I especially enjoyed Jeremy Garber's article, "A Spork in the Road" and Everett J. Thomas' editorial, "Seven (Missional) Apples." It was great to see concrete examples of how missional work is being done. A few stories can be so much more helpful than hours of theological conversation in understanding new concepts.*—Tim Nafziger, London, England*

IN THIS ISSUE

We all like to be chosen. But after Christ Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa, joined Central Plains Mennonite Conference, some leaders in that conference felt not only affirmed but challenged (see the stories on pages 11-15). Mennonite pastor David Boshart says, "They have challenged those of us who have always been Mennonite … to articulate our beliefs more clearly." Mennonite pastor Susan Janzen says this congregation helps us "see the old things with new eyes." Mennonite historian John D. Roth helps us look at our relationships with other Christian groups with new eyes (page 8). He offers three things to consider to make our ecumenism healthier. You may need a tissue to read the story of how one congregation supported the Miller family, including Nora, our editorial assistant, after the death of their baby boy (page 16). Jennifer Szambecki (page 18) challenges us to invite people of other ages, cultures, backgrounds and faith perspectives to our congregations. In this month's ACHE column (page 30), Joseph Kotva challenges us to share risk.*—Editors*

Give God our best

As this new year opens, our hearts are full of thanksgiving for each one who reads this letter—pastors, congregational leaders and members of Mennonite Church USA congregations—saints together in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are heartened when we hear of missional initiatives happening in your congregations. Mennonites are clearly a growing part of bringing Christ's healing and hope to all.

We wish we could visit with you in your congregational setting and learn firsthand the ways your congregation is being yeast, salt and light at home, across the street and around the world. Though you may often feel overwhelmed by the needs around you, your perseverance in being the body of Christ and ministering as Jesus did means you become something the world desperately needs—signs of the kingdom of God. You become signs of hope. You become signs of healing and reconciliation.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." It is a kingdom that is here in part—and still coming in complete fulness. Through this letter we want to encourage you. We encourage you not only to pray this prayer but be this prayer as well. The call is to become congregations with vibrant life in the kingdom of God. Congregations with vibrant life in the kingdom of God are people who work together in God's mission. Congregational members, leaders and pastors all play important roles. The Holy Spirit works most richly when people from across the congregation form a team to be and do their best for God.

Vibrant congregations intentionally listen to the Holy Spirit. They cultivate habits and practices that grow them spiritually. They pay attention to anchoring outreach—both evangelism and Christian activism—in prayer. They know they will only be able to sustain the work to which God calls them if they practice healthy habits of listening, prayer and reflection.

Congregations with vibrant kingdom life also learn to be open to "holy chaos." Venturing forth in witness and ministry usually results in some awkward realities. We don't always know what we are doing. We don't know what success looks like. It can seem messy and chaotic. The truth is, God keeps growing and forming us at the same time we are working to share God's salvation and wholeness with others. Fear of failure need not impair us. Doing it "right" is not what's most important. What is most important is giving God our best. We can trust God to help us take steps beyond where we have come.

Vibrant congregations in the kingdom of God keep alert to ways they can access and share resources with others. They connect in communities and conferences to enlarge and empower their ministries. Area conferences are ready to be sources for networking and tools to congregations undertaking ministries for Christ. There are also resources in the wider Christian church that may prove fruitful in congregations—especially when adapted in ways that have integrity with Anabaptist followers of Jesus Christ.

Scripture reveals that God's aim is to bring salvation and shalom to all. In Christ we become partners with God in God's saving mission in the world. "Churches are made up of ordinary people doing their best to do extraordinary things with Jesus," someone said. The missional priority of Mennonite Church USA challenges us to continue giving God our best: hearts, minds, energies, money, talents, gifts and skills. This missional giving of ourselves means we will not only pray, but we become Christ's prayer, "Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."—*Stan Shantz, Jane Roeschley and Beryl Jantzi for Mennonite Church USA's Missional Church Team*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

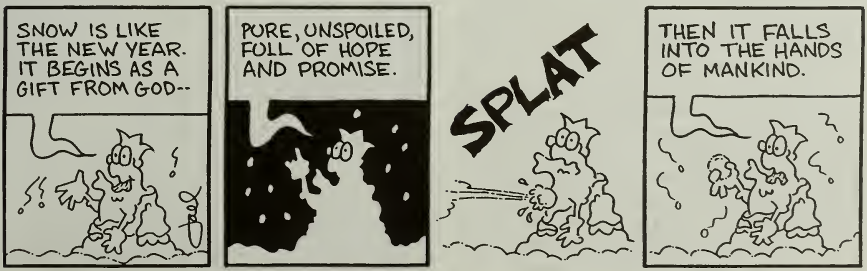
Some Anabaptists are planning to create an Anabaptist prayer book. This is

○ a good idea (69%)
○ not a good idea (14%)
○ I don't care (17%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


SNOW IS LIKE THE NEW YEAR. IT BEGINS AS A GIFT FROM GOD--
PURE, UNSPOILED, FULL OF HOPE AND PROMISE.
SPLAT
THEN IT FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF MANKIND.

IN BRIEF

EMU connects with Dominican Republic seminary

Moira R. Rogers, an associate professor of Spanish at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., taught an Introduction to Anabaptist Theology class Nov. 22-26, 2004, at the Seminario Anabautista del Caribe in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The seminar discussed the distinctive elements of an Anabaptist approach to theological reflection. The emphasis was on a critical reflection on what it means to respond to the current contextual challenges facing the participants from the perspective of Anabaptist emphases to Christian faith. The week-long class included dialogue with other contemporary Latin American theological traditions that seek to respond to local challenges.—*EMU News Service*

Two views of who's left behind

Tyndale House, which has sold 42 million books from the *Left Behind* series, has launched a counter series, written by Christian radio host Hank Hanegraaff. Contrary to the *Left Behind* view of Christians being raptured before a future apocalypse, Hanegraaff believes the Book of Revelation describes first-century persecution of Christians under Emperor Nero, not some future tribulations of nonbelievers.—*The Christian Century*

Bethel ends first phase of academic review

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College president E. Laverne Epp and vice president for academic affairs John Sheriff last month announced the results of the first phase of an academic program review.

When Epp assumed the Bethel presidency in 2002, he said a deliberate and comprehensive process of institutional planning was among his administration's top priorities. That planning process resulted in the identification of four core strengths. The first one, academic excellence, is the driving force behind Bethel's academic program review.

"Our purpose in conducting a review is to ensure that Bethel College has academic programs that are of the highest quality, that fit with our Anabaptist Christian values, our commitment to a liberal arts education and our market, and that can operate within the parameters dictated by our institutional model," Epp says.

Last summer, a team of administrators developed the institutional model to which Epp refers. One of its central purposes was to make the institution more student-centered. Another was encouraging teamwork aimed at achieving institutional goals. The model also posits an optimal enrollment of 625 students, 75 percent of whom live on campus; 195 new students (first-time freshmen and transfers) each year; and a retention/re-enrollment rate of 87 percent.

About a third of Bethel's existing programs will see significant change, though changes will be phased in over time.—*Bethel College News Service*

New director named for young adult program

STRASBOURG, France—YAMEN! the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network, a joint program of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and Mennonite Central Committee, has appointed a new international coordinator. Karina Derksen-Schrock began working from MCC's Akron, Pa., office on Nov. 22, 2004.

MCC has assumed administrative responsibility for YAMEN! with Eva Chermack of the Visitor Exchange Program supervising the program. Ray Brubacher from the Kitchener, Ont., MWC office will serve as the link to MWC.

Karina was born and lived in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) until 1998, when her missionary parents, Rick and Marilyn Derksen, moved back to the United States. She graduated recently from Bryn Mawr College and married Andrew Schrock on July 10. Karina and Andrew were youth stewards at the Global Church Village at Africa 2003 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Karina replaces Liesa Unger from Karlsrue, Germany, who directed the program since it was launched three years ago.—*MWC News Service*

LMHS students look at mission opportunities

Lisa Zimmerman, right, from Mennonite Central Committee chats with 10th graders Bethany McClearen, left, and Arielle Turner during mission inspiration and education week, held last November at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School.—*Fern Clemmer*

Israeli police protect Palestinian children

AT-TUWANI, West Bank—On Dec. 9, 2004, Israeli police hurriedly loaded into their vehicle five Palestinian children from the village of Tuba as they walked toward their school in At-Tuwani. Stick-wielding Israeli school boys from the nearby Ma'on settlement disrupted their early morning trek on foot.

According to the Palestinian children, even though Israeli soldiers in a military jeep and Israeli police in a police vehicle were escorting them, the two Israeli youths, hidden in tree-shrouded Havot Ma'on outpost, got as close to them as five or six meters. But the police loaded the frightened children into their vehicle and sped off toward At-Tuwani.

Jerry Levin of Christian Peacemaker Teams and Adriano, an Operation Dove observer, heard the loud smash of an object hitting one of the vehicles. Students later confirmed that the Israeli youths had thrown four or five stones at them as they rode by in the police vehicle.

A student added that, besides seeing the settler youth dart toward them from hiding in an Israeli settlement outpost, a settlement school vehicle could be seen parked close by with a woman sitting next to the driver's seat. The student said she and her friends have seen this vehicle often, and she knows that the boys who tried to attack her and her friends go to the school in Ma'on.—*CPT*

Yoder receives awards for ASL interpreting

GOSHEN, Ind.—Myron Yoder, Goshen College assistant professor of American Sign Language, received both a national and a state award this fall for his contribution to the ASL interpreting profession.

During its annual conference and board meeting on Nov. 13, 2004, the Indiana Chapter of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf presented Yoder with the President's Award, which is given to an individual who has benefited ICRID and the profession of interpreters.

Last October, Yoder received the Mary Stotler Award, which includes a $1,000 cash award, from the two national organizations of the interpreting profession: the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and the Conference of Interpreter Trainers. The RID has a membership of over 10,000 interpreters, and the CIT is made up of program directors and professors or instructors of interpreter training programs across the United States. This national award recognizes significant contributions to the field of interpretation and interpreter education.—*Goshen College News Service*

Bluffton University announces appointments

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Lee Snyder, president of Bluffton University, announced three administrative appointments Dec. 6, 2004. The appointments reflect changes in responsibilities for current members of the president's cabinet.

Stanley Clemens was named special assistant to the president for campaign development, and Hans Houshower was named vice president for advancement. Both positions began Jan. 1. Eric Fulcomer was named vice president for enrollment management and student life, beginning in August.

Clemens has served as the vice president for advancement since 1999. Before that he was a member of Bluffton's mathematics faculty. In his new role, Clemens will be responsible for campaign development and work closely with the president and with the vice president for advancement.

Houshower has served as vice president for academic advancement and learning technologies since 2002. He will be responsible for the daily activities of the advancement department, including all development, public relations, alumni, parent and church relations efforts.

Fulcomer will add oversight of the student life office to his responsibilities, with the retirement of Don Schweingruber. After 33 years with Bluffton, Schweingruber will retire at the end of the 2004 academic year.—*Robin Bowlus*

Veiths bring healing and hope in spiritually dark Macau

George Veith, mission worker in Macau, enjoys snacks at the end of class with his English students. Teaching English opens doors for engaging people in faith exploration. George and Tobia Veith of Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness are opening doors and inviting local residents to explore Christianity to bring healing and hope to what they describe as a spiritually dark place.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

CMU campus used for TV Christmas film

WINNIPEG—On Dec. 11, 2004, hundreds of thousands of people across North America saw the campus of Canadian Mennonite University on television, though they probably didn't know it. That's because CMU served as one of the Winnipeg locations for *Naughty or Nice*, an ABC made-for-TV Christmas special starring comedian George Lopez with costar Lisa Vidal.

Film crews were on CMU's north campus last June, when several rooms inside the 1922 neo-Gothic administration building doubled as locations in the storyline in which the main character's wife is a college professor. CMU's gymnasium (serving as a faculty lounge Christmas party location), auditorium (serving as a recital hall location) and the Heritage Lounge (serving as a faculty member's office) are shown in the movie.—*Kevin Heinrichs*

Volunteer hospitalized after traffic accident

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.—Ryan Nafziger, 25, leader of Mennonite Mission Network's Service Adventure unit in Albuquerque, remained at University of New Mexico Hospital Dec. 20, 2004, with injuries suffered in a Dec. 14 traffic accident. Nafziger was walking near the unit house when a van pulling out of a video store parking lot struck him. He suffered fractures to his skull and one knee; several bones around his eye were broken, but doctors have discovered no damage to the eye itself. While doctors are optimistic about Nafziger's prospects for recovery, he remains in an intensive care unit at the hospital.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

IN BRIEF

MAX mutual aid program approved

On Nov. 18, 2004, the MutualAid eXchange (MAX) Board of Directors approved creation of a formal Mutual Aid Ministries program that "will help care for the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of Anabaptists under burden." The objectives of the program are to join the church to develop mutual aid ministries that are relevant, meaningful and tangible. For more information, visit www.mutualaidexchange.com.—*MAX*

NCC protests networks' refusal to air ad

Responding to the refusal of the CBS and NBC television networks to air a message from the United Church of Christ, a nationwide group of faith-based communicators issued a statement Dec. 3, 2004, challenging the networks' action as "arbitrary" and contrary to the principles of freedom of speech and equal access to media. "The controversial issue here is not the content of the ad, but the arbitrary standards of the network gate keepers," they begin. "Church doors are open to all who would come; but broadcast channels are increasingly closed to all but the wealthy and well-connected."

—National Council of Churches USA

Give & take

by John D. Roth

The scene that unfolded in Zurich, Switzerland, along the northern bank of the Limmat River on a late Saturday afternoon in June 2004 was remarkable. Standing at the spot where the Anabaptist leader Felix Manz had been drowned in January 1527, representatives of the Zurich city council and the regional Reformed church publicly asked forgiveness from their "brothers and sisters in the Mennonite faith" and expressed the hope that two religious traditions—divided for nearly five centuries—be reconciled.

However, this event, initiated by the Reformed Church of Zurich, was only the latest in a series of ecumenical gestures extended to various Mennonite groups in recent years by other Christian denominations. These invitations to dialogue have pushed Mennonites to think about their history, faith and practice with a new perspective, and they raise a host of challenging questions about our understanding of Christian ecumenism.

Traditionally **Mennonites have been skeptical** about interchurch relations in general, and the ecumenical movement in particular.

Traditionally Mennonites have been skeptical about interchurch relations in general, and the ecumenical movement in particular. Apart from a short period (1908-1917), when the General Conference Mennonite Church joined the Federal Council of Churches in America, Mennonites have shied away from formal associations with other Christian denominations, at least those beyond the so-called Historic Peace Churches. Occasionally our church bodies have sent observers to the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches or the National Association of Evangelicals, but we have never formally joined such organizations. The reasons behind this reluctance vary. Numerically we are a tiny church; we have long memories of persecution at the hands of the more powerful denominations; our concerns around issues of peace have kept us at the margins of the religious mainstream, and many have feared that ecumenical dialogue will lead inevitably to a watering down of doctrine and a loss of a distinctive identity.

Yet Mennonites have always been engaged in ecumenical exchange. And sometimes the most vigorous borrowers have been those most critical of the "ecumenical movement." Evangelistic crusades from D.L. Moody to Billy Graham, for example, inspired parallel revival movements

Thoughts on a healthy Mennonite ecumenism

in Mennonite circles, especially among theological conservatives. In more recent years the popularity of Christian fiction in Mennonite circles, along with widespread support for Protestant TV and radio programs, have given an ecumenical shape to Mennonite spirituality. During the 1990s Mennonite support of the Promise Keepers movement suggested yet another instance of ecumenical exchange. And the current popularity of "purpose-driven" approaches to congregational mission and the Willow Creek model of church growth have probably influenced the Mennonite church more profoundly than institutional membership in any ecumenical association.

The recent invitations to dialogue from the Reformed Church, the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholics are indeed newsworthy. But contrary to appearances, ecumenical encounters are not a new phenomenon for Mennonites. Whether we are aware of it or not, Mennonites have always participated in ecumenical dialogue. Because these encounters—both formal and informal—shape us, they are worthy of our careful attention.

As we move forward in these and other ecumenical exchanges, we would do well to hold before us at least three basic considerations.

1. The Mennonite church has been sustained, enriched and enlivened by interactions with Christian groups beyond our own boundaries. Sometimes we may be tempted to idealize the recovery or preservation of some pristine "Mennonite" identity that goes straight back to the Anabaptists or the early church, uncorrupted by any sort of outside influence. Such an ideal, however, is not only impossible to achieve but foolish to pursue. Living traditions are always renewed by the active interaction—conversation, sharing, borrowing, disagreements—with other traditions.

Indeed, many characteristics we regard as central to Mennonite identity today were actually imported from other traditions at some earlier time. Four-part singing, for example, once regarded by many Mennonites as a worldly innovation sneaking in from the German Lutheran choral tradition, is now widely assumed to be a Mennonite distinctive. The emergence of colleges, publishing enterprises, missionary boards, relief and service committees, church camps and mutual aid societies in the 20th-century—now regarded as crucial to the health and well-being of our church—were frequently patterned on models already existing in other denominations. Our current interest in the "missional" church or our concern for worship renewal—whether liturgical-contemplative or contemporary-praise—are only the most recent examples of ecumenical borrowing we hope will enrich our faith.

The harsh political rhetoric between the religious right and left over "values" **threatens to divide our congregations** in ways that are corrosive to our Christian witness as the body of Christ.

At their best, ecumenical exchanges are a recognition that God is also at work in settings beyond the Mennonite church. Clearly we have much to learn from the insights and experiences of other Christians.

2. At the same time, ecumenical interaction brings risks. Because we are a small denomination whose distinctive emphases related to peace can

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often put us in tension with other traditions, Mennonites are susceptible to being swept up by the dominant religious currents of the day or allowing the agenda of our conversations to be set by the broader culture.

Thus, for example, when the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy tore through American Christianity in the 1940s and 1950s, Mennonites generally accepted the terms of that debate and imported them into our church life in ways that became destructive. Later, certain dispensationalist readings of the book of Revelation, popular in the religious mainstream, became equally divisive in our churches.

Today the harsh political rhetoric between the religious right and left over "values"—with each side claiming to hold the Christian high ground—threatens to divide our congregations in ways that are alien to the best of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition and corrosive to our Christian witness as the body of Christ. We never live in a cultural vacuum, but healthy traditions have the wisdom and the courage to reshape—not just mirror—the agenda of the broader religious culture.

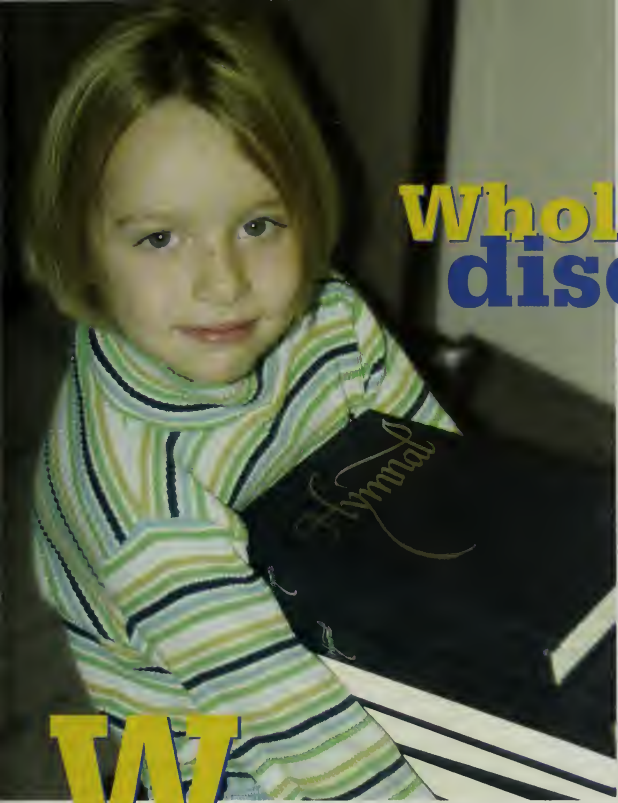
3. Ecumenical borrowing that leads to healthy renewal requires all of us—individuals, congregations, conferences and church agencies—to work hard at active discernment. Such discernment begins with a posture that is constantly open to a fresh movement of the Spirit but at the same time resists the impulse to become reeds blowing in the wind with every new religious fad that comes our way. In the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, our identity is defined not so much by doctrinal propositions as by a particular religious posture, shaped by the roots of our history and our distinctive way of reading the Bible. At a minimum, Mennonites seeking discernment amid the modern smorgasbord of ecumenical influences might ask the following questions:

We should embrace insights beyond our tradition **that strengthen our collective worship** and elevate the primacy of the gathered church in our mission outreach.

- Does the borrowing help us embrace a full, rich understanding of Jesus? In our understanding of the Trinity, Jesus represents God's fullest revelation to humanity. In Christ we encounter God as Savior of the world and as Lord over every aspect of our life. Thus, we should be cautious about theologies that lead to a partial or truncated view of Jesus. We should embrace insights beyond our tradition that help us maintain a high view of Jesus in which spiritual concerns and ethical practice are never divorced from each other.
- Does the borrowing promote a view of the Believers' Church as the primary focus of God's saving activity in the world? At its best, the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition has understood the Christian life to be anchored in the teaching, discernment, encouragement and witness of the local congregation and other Mennonite brothers and sisters in the broader church. Thus, we should be cautious about ecumenical borrowing that promotes individualistic understandings of faith or perspectives that reduce the church to the interests of some higher allegiance, be that the nation, economic status or cultural success. We should embrace insights beyond our tradition that strengthen our collective worship and elevate the primacy of the gathered church in our mission outreach.
- Finally, does the borrowing help us bear witness to God's reconciling love in a world that is broken? The Spirit of God, we have taught, is made visible in the world through the miracle of reconciliation: the healing of broken bodies and minds, the restoration of broken relationships, the witness to the power of forgiveness in the face of retribution and violence, and a confidence in the power of love over hatred. Thus, we should be cautious about ecumenical borrowing that ignores the profound needs of the world or diminishes the risky work of reconciliation. We should embrace insights beyond our tradition that strengthen our commitment to testify in word and deed to God's healing love.

Five hundred years ago, the mainstream Christian churches regarded Mennonites as heretics and sought to eliminate them by whatever means possible. Today that is no longer the case. Daily experience has long taught us that we are not the only Christians in our communities, and we do not hold a corner on Christian truth. Our testimony to God's faithfulness has been strengthened through our encounters with other Christians. For this we have reason to be grateful. But even as we borrow, let us be vigilant about the challenge of discernment. For we are inheritors of a treasure—a treasure in jars of clay, to be sure, but a treasure nonetheless. Let us borrow in order to enrich, strengthen and empower our distinctive contribution. And let us pursue more ecumenical conversations in a spirit of confidence and humility.

John D. Roth teaches history at Goshen (Ind.) College. He is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen.



Whole-life discipleship

New congregation finds Central Plains a 'fit' in following Christ faithfully.

by Laurie L. Oswald

When Christ Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa, sought a place to belong, they didn't seek a denomination or a set of beliefs. They wanted to find companions with whom they could walk on a road of faithfulness to Christ. Mennonite Church USA has provided this community for the formerly independent congregation.

After much searching, discernment and reading about what faith tradition would best fit the 100-member congregation, Christ Community became familiar with Anabaptist theology and its focus on discipleship, community and following Christ's way of peace. The congregation joined Central Plains Mennonite Conference, one of the denomination's 21 area conferences, in June 2004.

While other traditions, such as the Evangelical Free Church and others, offered possibilities, becoming part of the Mennonites seemed the best fit for the congregation, its members say. And belonging to a denomination also allows the independent group to help heal some of the disunity within Christ's body.

> **Given the apparent unfaithfulness of American Christianity to the gospel, I asked myself and others what faithfulness to the gospel would look like in our present context.**—Kent McDougal

"Given the apparent unfaithfulness of American Christianity to the gospel, I asked myself and others what faithfulness to the gospel would look like in our present context," says Kent McDougal, senior pastor.

Chad Mason, ministry coordinator, says, "If we were saying we believed in the unity of the church, then we knew we needed to find a place to plug in, and joining Mennonite

Continued on page 12

Sense of belonging: Kent McDougal (left) talks with a young person at Christ Community Church.

Continued from page 11

Church USA is one way of helping us do our part in not only professing unity but practicing it."

Lisa Campbell, who belongs to one of the congregation's five home groups, believes that Christ Community and its relationship with the Mennonites helps her not only believe in Jesus but follow his way with others. "Christ Community is challenging me to build relationships in my Christian walk," she says. "It's hard to find a church these days that is willing to live out the truth that community is important."

Finding this fit for faithful community and unity has not come easily or quickly for Kent, Chad and other members of Christ Community, they say. For example, Kent, 45, has searched for decades for what church should be like and constantly re-examines and grows in his understandings.

"I grew up as a conservative, fundamentalist General Baptist, but in college already I began to ask questions about how I lived out my faith," Kent says. "I began to wonder if Christianity was only about asking Jesus into one's heart, or if it also meant proclaiming God's good news in Christ in all of life by bringing God's reign into the world?"

He read widely and much, including books by the late John Howard Yoder. He also spent time with Francis Schaeffer at the L'Abri community in Switzerland. And he delved into writers from the Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran traditions.

As a result, faithfulness began to look more like a practical, daily living of the gospel than an individualized and privatized relationship with God. "I began to feel conflict with the view that we are just passing through this world on our way to heaven," he says. "My changing perspective created more of a gulf between me and the culture, as I searched for how to live God's reign here and now by bearing witness in the shape of the cross."

Chad, a writer for outdoor magazines and a former Southern Baptist from Kentucky, also grew restless with his former perspective on Christianity, shaped by American evangelicalism and fundamentalism that sometimes promotes a Jesus-and-me attitude. He was hungry for something more holistic, he says.

He found the bread he sought in Christ Community's willingness to ask the hard questions and walk into an uncertain future. The congregation also incorporates some ancient liturgy into its worship and has weekly Communion. And it invites its members to participate in one of five home groups that meet after the Sunday worship service and include a fellowship meal and sharing and prayer.

These elements of full-bodied worship, intimate fellowship and theological faithfulness help to root the young man in a spiritual home. "I moved around as a kid and am one of those 30-somethings who has struggled to find his roots," he says. "Some people in his generation have also felt an emptiness with some of the surface ways we've come to worship in America. … Recovering a sense of history by belonging to a longtime Anabaptist tradition, and the use of ancient liturgy has brought me some sense of home."

Solo trek to mutual community: Christ Community realizes that living out God's reign faithfully is not a solo endeavor but requires the solidarity of a like-minded community. In 2002, Kent responded to the congregation's desire to find journey mates and called Keith Harder, director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership, to begin exploration and dialogue. Mutual gift-giving has been the result of this new relationship, both parties say.

"It's been a rich journey, a dialogue at times when we could almost finish each other's sentences and we found we were thoroughly on the same page," says David Boshart, pastor of West Union Mennonite Church in Parnell. He and Tim Detweiler, Central Plains' east regional minister, met many times with the pastors and congregation.

"They have challenged those of us who have always been Mennonite and have the Anabaptist DNA in our blood to articulate our beliefs more clearly," David says. "They help us not make so many assumptions that new people coming into our midst will automatically understand what we believe and why."

Fellow cluster group members Susan Janzen, pastor of Cedar Falls (Iowa) Mennonite Church, and Curt Kuhns, pastor of Manson (Iowa) Mennonite Church, echo David's appreciation for Christ Community's challenge and inspiration.

"Their coming to us is like when new believers come into the church; they help see the old things with new eyes and experience in fresh ways aspects of Anabaptism we have taken for granted," Susan says.

She appreciates Christ Community's way of helping steer the Anabaptist ship away from the reefs that stop the church short of endorsing a whole-life discipleship. "They challenge us to realize there is some danger in drifting into the American evangelical mainstream," Susan says. "They often say they have been where we are sometimes tempted to go, and they testify why we shouldn't go there."

Calling people to give whole self to whole gospel: Curt also appreciates Christ Community's two-year process for inviting, teaching and forming new members. "They help their new initiates know that Christ's call is a call upon their whole lives and not just an evangelical confession of faith," Curt says. "It is a response of giving one's whole self in response to God saying, I want all of you."

Much of the initial inquiry from new believers happens at Zanzibar's, a coffee café Kent frequents most days and interfaces with many 20-something students. Most of them are disillusioned with the church, and a few are unchurched. Christ Community rents the sanctuary of a Presbyterian church for its worship, so neither pastor has a church office. Chad also frequents a coffee shop in Ankeny, a suburb of Des Moines where he lives.

"I relate to a lot of young adults who no longer go to church because they feel the way the gospel is preached and lived has made it powerless in our society," Kent says. "We hang out and discuss such books as *The Politics of Jesus*, and a few of them go a bit further and come to our church. ... Many young people in this generation want to find their way back to a faithfulness to Christ."

Chad believes the congregation's quest won't lead them to a certain destination but can help it make new discoveries about how to bring God's reign to Des Moines. That includes learning how to respond in peaceful ways to the violence of 9-11, how to be good stewards of the land and resources and how to incorporate more gifts of women within the church.

My dream for Mennonite Church USA is that we let the world do what it does and we do what we do, which is to follow Jesus.—Chad Mason

Despite not knowing the exact road map, Chad is certain of one thing: The denomination must follow Christ's footsteps, no matter where the path leads and or how much out of step Mennonites are with the surrounding culture. "My dream for Mennonite Church USA is that we let the world do what it does and we do what we do, which is to follow Jesus," Chad says. TM

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA. She took the photos on pages 11-15.

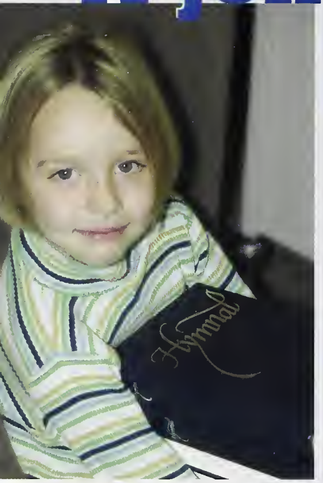
ZANZIBAR'S
2723

Whole lives: Chad Mason (left) and Kent McDougal in front of the coffee shop where they talk with many young adults.

A joining of stories

One congregation's journey to join its story with the story of the Mennonites.

by Chad Mason



In the middle of this culture of death, God has, by the Holy Spirit, opened up a space where new possibilities exist for human relationships—possibilities to give without worry and to love our enemies.

Christ Community Church began as Community Bible Church on Easter 1990. Like so many Protestant churches, we were born in a schism—the gory details of which I will spare you. By God's mercy, however, even an illegitimate birth produces a life worth saving.

Our parent church was (and is) what you might call a nondenominational "megachurch," having more than 2,000 members at that time. Its roots—and therefore ours—are deep in American fundamentalism, and its formative influences came from the evangelical church-growth movement.

But we are not now what we were then. We originally numbered 400; today we have grown down to 100. We have contemplated parlaying these results into a consulting business for churches that have outgrown their buildings and face expensive projects to expand. With our "church shrinkage plan," you'll save millions of dollars, of which we will take but a small percentage.

Mark Twain said that all humor is born of tragedy, and in making you laugh, perhaps I am only coping. Part of our painful loss has resulted from our knuckle-headedness as sinners, but another part of our loss has arisen from the confrontation between the gospel and an Americanized version of Christianity that has become obtuse to the way of the cross.

True colors: That brings me to how we came to be here, on your doorstep. From early in our life as a church, we have operated under the influence of Mennonite theology through the work of John Howard Yoder, Donald Kraybill, Gerald Schlabach and others. Through these members of your flock, we heard that the gospel was so much more than a trip to heaven or personal therapy. We heard the Good News that in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the old world has been put to death, and a whole new world has been born. We heard the Good News that God has exposed the true colors of the powers of this world, triumphed

Sharing gifts: Chad Mason

over them by the cross, and we need no longer fear their fury. In the middle of this culture of death, God has, by the Holy Spirit, opened up a space where new possibilities exist for human relationships—possibilities to give without worry and to love our enemies.

As we heard this Good News from you, we felt almost as though we were hearing the gospel for the first time.

Another major influence on us came from Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican liturgists. We came to embrace an ancient pattern of worship—not because we like antiques but because we wanted to be united, in our worship, with millions of Christians throughout time and space.

Finally, we were influenced by our interaction with the leaders of this particular conference. Tim Detweiler and Dave Boshart, spent a great amount of time with us, helping us discern God's leading. In these men we saw not only keen theological minds but the gentleness of the peaceable kingdom.

These three influences have led us to seek unification with a larger body and to decide that you are that body.

What contribution might Christ Community Church make to Central Plains Mennonite Conference. Your testimony and our observations over the past two years suggest that your tradition, like all others in the American context, faces a continual temptation to turn away from your vision toward a more enculturated religion, toward other visions that seem a better fit to succeed in America. Specifically you are tempted to embrace American evangelicalism. You are tempted to go where we have been. Perhaps we can be an experienced voice of encouragement and exhortation, saying, "Do not neglect the gift, that is in you" (1 Timothy 4:14).

Faithful witness: God has not called us to be successful on the world's terms; all he asks of us is a faithful witness. We must never forbid the possibility that our witness might be rejected, that it might be a witness unto death. (Never fear; our God raises the dead.) We relearned this lesson from you, we cannot thank you enough for it, and you can count on us to keep repeating it. We have benefited from your gift, and we are persuaded that you owe that gift to all of God's people.

We believe the time is right for God to join our story to your story and yours to that of all the saints as we wait and work together for the day when all God's people shall be one body under one head.

We believe the time is right for God to join our story to your story and yours to that of all the saints as we wait and work together for the day when all God's people shall be one body under one head. Meanwhile, let us proclaim the kingdom of God together in word and deed. As Yoder concludes his classic, *The Politics of Jesus*, "Vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur." (Our Lamb has conquered; him let us follow.)

Chad Mason is ministry coordinator at Christ Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa. This article is adapted from his address in June at the 2004 delegate meeting of Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

Communities
Pursuing
Christ's
Purpose

THIRD IN A SERIES
LIFE TOGETHER

MILLER
"ALL THE DAYS ORDAINED FOR ME
WERE WRITTEN IN YOUR BOOK
BEFORE ONE OF THEM CAME TO BE"
PSALM 139:16

Nora Miller

A haven of healing

A church family supports a couple after their baby's death.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Mennonite Church USA's priority in helping congregations join God's work means helping others cope with life at home as well as helping those in need in other parts of the world.

No one expects their baby to die a day after being born. But neither did Nora and Forrest (Woody) Miller expect their church family to bring so much life after the death of their son, Avery Quinn.

From the minute the couple discovered in prenatal care that Avery had a fatal birth defect until the funeral and months of grief and beyond, First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., provided a haven of healing. When waves of loss struck, the congregation provided anchors for the Millers and their daughters, Olivia and Sophia.

After doctors shared the bad news in March 2002, friends at church affirmed the couple's decision to carry Avery full term, even though he'd likely be born dead. His condition, Patau's Syndrome, creates defects because of an extra chromosome. Avery was born May 7, 2002, with half a heart and a cleft palate, and he died May 8.

"If it hadn't been for my church family and God's presence, I wouldn't have made it," Nora says. "I didn't know if Avery would be born alive. But God gave me the grace and strength to simply do what I had to do. … Some people prayed for a miracle that he would be totally healed. But I know in my heart that the greatest miracle of all was that he was breathing at all.

"I had asked God to let me hold him alive for just 30 minutes, and God granted me 27 hours and 11 minutes. And I felt really blessed and happy. … I got to cuddle him, talk to him and to sleep with him. … To us, he was a miracle and a very beautiful baby."

The loving nurture Nora received leading up to labor prepared her for the experience. "When we first got the news, our prayer chain from the Sunday school class started immediately," she says. "That night, about 10 women from our class dropped everything to come over to pray and cry with me.

"But it wasn't only the time before or after his death that our church family cared. … We still get notes in our church mailbox from one woman. That caring to me is what church is all about."

Woody agrees. "I don't know how other people cope with this sort of thing without the caring support system we have here at First Mennonite," he says. "Without this, it would have taken much longer to go through the grief process. … Friends, family and a faith community make the difference. Our community supported and encouraged my own personal belief that Avery is in heaven and is totally healed in the presence of God."

The Millers absorbed the hope of heaven's healing at Avery's graveside service. Pastor Clarence Rempel shared a meditation about lessons Avery taught him. The *Newton Kansan* printed a column Clarence wrote about these lessons that corresponded with Avery's life verse, Psalm 139:16-17: "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them."

Clarence wrote: "The first lesson is that human life is precious. … Its preciousness has nothing to do with outward appearance or outward perfection. Avery taught me that. … Whatever image of God is, it's not physical appearance. It's not physical perfection. It's not physical normality. It is God-likeness in our inmost being. I looked into Avery's face

Friends: Cindy Unruh helped Nora Miller plant flowers beside Avery's grave marker.

and saw the image of God and recognized Avery as one of my own—fully human, infinitely precious, deserving of all our love and tender care."

Anchors, gifts, friends: Caring and connected relationships brought healing to the Millers' earthly life, just as heaven brought healing to Avery. The couple remembers how the pastoral staff tenderly cared for them and the way their Sunday school class brought meals to their home. Close friends provided emotional support. The Millers say these trusted people were gifts. But these people say the Millers' trust was the greatest gift of all.

"Woody and Nora gave the church a precious gift in their openness in sharing their crisis with all of us," Clarence says. "Their trusting us to support them in their unfolding situation helped us to grow in doing that with them and now with others."

Ken Regier, a fellow Sunday school class member, says he received blessing in walking with the Millers. It helped him link how caring for each other inside the church is the other side of the calling to reach beyond church doors. Mennonite Church USA's priority in helping congregations join God's work in the world doesn't always mean helping the needy across the globe. It also means helping others cope with life at home, he says.

"We can bring lots of new people into the church, but if we don't know how to care for them once they are here, then it falls flat," he says.

Close friends also have provided ongoing support, including Cindy Unruh. At a time when Cindy is undergoing treatment for cancer, she remains a loyal friend.

"She called me on the day of Avery's second birthday to tell me she was thinking about our family, even though it was right during the time when she first learned of her cancer," Nora says. "She's taught me that it's OK to ask other people about their pain and their loss, rather than ignoring it or not talking about it because you're afraid it will bring up too many memories.

"And watching how she is so open about her situation with her kids reminds me that I must be open with my daughters, too, and stay present to them. I don't need to put on a happy face all the time. I can show my pain. But neither do I want to miss out on their growing up because I am absent in my grieving of Avery. God has given me children to care for, and friends like Cindy give me the courage to do that."

A circle of compassion, healing: People such as Cindy and Sunday school class members who care in the midst of their own daily struggles have made the difference between a loss that could have shattered the family and a loss that has instilled increased compassion for others. For example, Nora is serving on First Mennonite's caregiving commission and reaches out to a family in a nearby community who also lost a baby with the same birth defect that took Avery's life.

And Woody says he is more sensitive to the losses that others undergo and wants to reach out to them over the long haul. "A family doesn't heal all in one day or one month or even in one year," he says. "It's good for us not to assume that everything is OK just because a family comes into church all smiles."

Nora had a dream about Avery that reminds her she'll always share the wonder and miracle of his life with the congregation that shared God's goodness in the midst of grief. It reminds her that even death and tears are not strong enough to quell God's life and joy.

About three months after Avery died, Nora had a dream about him, she says. "In my dream, I had him propped up on a table and was thinking how I knew he was going to die. But at the same time, he had this angelic aura around him. He was smiling and beaming and he had a normal face—so unlike the marred face he had because of the cleft palate.

"But all the while in the dream, even though I knew he was going to die, I felt reassured that he is really OK now, that he is whole, well and happy. That is the first and last dream I've ever had about Avery. But it ... points to a reality beyond us, the reality of God and heaven and ongoing life."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Laurie L. Oswald

More sensitive to the losses of others: Olivia, Nora, Sophia and Woody Miller

Changing the face of 'Mennonite'

Jennifer Szambecki is director of development for Mennonite Mission Network of Mennonite Church USA.

If you are reading this, chances are good you are an "ethnic Mennonite" or at least that you have been submerged in the Mennonite community for some time. Chances are better that—even if you weren't raised Mennonite—you were raised in a Christian home.

I know not everyone who reads *The Mennonite* (or attends a Mennonite church or works for a Mennonite organization) was raised Mennonite or even Christian. I am one of a small but growing minority of people who were drawn to faith in Jesus and became Mennonite later in my life.

At every level in Mennonite Church USA is a movement to diversify the "face" of Mennonitism. You may hear people say they want more colors, generations, backgrounds and perspectives to feel welcome in the Mennonite church. In many ways I embody the kind of person such Mennonites are talking about: I'm young, female, was raised in a relatively urban setting, came to faith as an adult, did not attend a Mennonite college, do not have a "Mennonite" last name, never served in Mennonite Central Committee or Mennonite Voluntary Service and break other molds of the traditional Mennonite.

> What are you doing to invite people of other ages, cultures, backgrounds and faith perspectives?

Lately I've noticed that while these ideas about diversity are noble, they are lacking in practice, all the way down to the dinner table.

Some questions:

- Have you ever sung "Johnny Appleseed" or "God Is Great" at your family dinner table or church fellowship meals? Were there ever guests or newcomers present?
- Have you ever called out—in any given situation—to sing the Doxology or 606 without giving the page number in the hymnal or having the printed words otherwise available?
- Have you ever led worship in your church, given the Scripture readings and assumed everyone in the room knew right where to find the book of Jonah, for example?
- Have you ever met someone new and—upon hearing his or her last name—tried to think who this person might be related to and how he or she might be related to you?

Not only do average Mennonites assume everyone around them had similar experiences in the Mennonite context (camp, college, one on a short list of last names), they assume everyone had a good, Christian upbringing. You can't be raised in North America without learning the Lord's Prayer, right?

This is a human tendency, one I share. And I realize these assumptions are subconscious—not made intentionally or maliciously. In fact, what drew me to the Mennonite perspective was the warm, accepting, downright pleasant nature of every Mennonite I met. But even the Mennonites I know with the most open arms, even those who have been all over the world and know what it means to feel out of place, even the most culturally sensitive friends-to-all—unconsciously fall victim to this insensitivity. They can make someone from across the globe feel welcome in their homes yet alienate their next-door neighbors.

I invite you to visit a Catholic service (or any faith practice with which you are unfamiliar, preferably one in a predominantly African-American, Hispanic or Asian area of your nearest urban area). Take a Saturday evening and go to Mass. Sit among a group of people who were raised in the same schools, traditions and rituals. Experience for yourself how it feels to not know what, when, how or why.

Then, the next morning, take that experience with you to your Mennonite church. Pretend you don't believe in Jesus but are searching. Or pretend you're a disgruntled member of another denomination and you want to find out what this Mennonite thing is all about.

What is your congregation doing to make outsiders feel welcome? What are you doing—from one-on-one interactions to the way your church bulletins are written—to invite people of other ages, cultures, backgrounds and faith perspectives? How can you make your home, congregation or business more inclusive? I don't have the answers to these questions; I'm still trying to memorize the Doxology.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **How Mennonite groups view women in ministry**—Paul Schrag
- **An ode to walking**—Layton Friesen
- **Fear of feeling**—Martha Ann Burgard

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Choice Books hit record sales in 2004

Nine regional distributors and 40 distribution centers sell 4.5 million books.

At the rate of nearly 13,000 books per day, Choice Books was on course in December 2004 to sell more than 4.5 million books last year. However, this inter-Anabaptist book ministry's real goal is not about numbers. It hopes to catch the eye of customers nationwide who may never set foot in a Christian bookstore or church.

Customer responses in 2004 suggest that Choice Books (CB) is fulfilling its mission in some unusual places and ways.

A drugstore manager in New Jersey recently received a phone call from a customer who said, "Who puts the books on that display in the pharmacy area?"

Not sure to which books the customer was referring, the manager said that he did not know and prepared for a tirade.

Instead, the customer said, "Whoever does saved my marriage."

Apparently while she was waiting for a prescription, the customer picked up the book *Men Are Like Waffles, Women Are Like Spaghetti*. She said that she and her husband had been headed for divorce before she discovered this CB book.

Another customer in Michigan wrote, "My 80-plus-year-old mother has accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior because I bought books from a CB display instead of the Harlequin Romances she used to buy. Now when she tells me she needs books, I know exactly where to go and would not be able to buy these books if it weren't for your ministry."

In some cases, Choice Books faces opposition to the Christian message promoted by the books on its displays.

When approaching a display in a supermarket in Miami, the CB service representative noticed a woman laying her hands on the display and uttering something.

"I thought, 'Hey, cool, she is praying over my display,'" he says. It turned out that the black-clad, sunken-eyed woman was a witch praying that the display would be removed from the store.

When asked why she hated the books and display, the woman said, "They repulse me; they make me sick."

Such complaints are sometimes enough to cause retailers to remove CB displays from their stores.

Occasionally, CB representatives have opportunities to share their faith with customers. On one such occasion in early 2004, the same CB service representative in Miami, crossed the path of O.J. Simpson. After a short conversation in the store, the CB representative hurried to the parking lot, grabbed the book *Don't Throw in the Towel* from his van and approached Simpson as he was getting into his car.

E Dale Mast

Bonnie Yoder, a book reviewer, checks out the Choice Books display at the Sharp Shopper store in Harrisonburg, Va.

"What do I want this for?" Simpson said.

But after glancing at the cover he said, "Are you guys hiding the Bible under a different cover now?"

Choice Books representatives are constantly looking for new locations that may be willing to accept CB displays. Daily, they approach store managers across the country to present Choice Books' product and service.

"God provides ministry opportunities in some of the most unusual places and ways," says John Bomberger, chief executive officer for Choice Books. "Unusual events, opportunities and places give encouragement and meaning to our work and also remind us that God is using Choice Books to make a difference in peoples' lives."

Choice Books operates through a network of nine regional distributors who work cooperatively with a central office located in Harrisonburg, Va. With over 40 distribution centers scattered across the United States, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, CB representatives service over 8,000 inspirational book displays. They are in supermarkets, mass merchandise stores, airports, drug stores, travel centers, gift shops and on U.S. Army and Air Force bases. Choice Books' Web site is www.choicebooks.org.
—E. Dale Mast of Choice Books News Service

Unusual events, opportunities and places . . . remind us that God is using Choice Books to make a difference in peoples' lives. —John Bomberger

Is a 401k retirement account gambling?

Third Way Café staff pick the top 20 questions they answered in 2004.

Do you "convert" or just decide to become Mennonite? If there isn't a church around, can you teach yourself?

The top 20 favorite questions received by Third Way Café in 2004, as chosen by staff, included those that picked up on Mennonite quirks, "glad-you-asked-that" questions, and "you've-got-to-be-kidding-but-probably-aren't" questions. As one questioner acknowledged, these things are not always obvious. The questions appear in no special order and are direct quotations, when possible.

1. Where was I baptized? "I was baptized by immersion by a Bishop (Jacob?) Martin from the Kitchener area in the early 1940s—together with several siblings—but have no record of it. The baptism took place in Fraser Lake, near Fort Stewart, Ontario."

2. Is a mortgage the same as usury? A caller wanted to know whether Mennonites think that since a normal mortgage requires two or three times the principal in interest, does that equate to the biblical "usury" practice, and is a 401k retirement account gambling?

3. Need Mennonite interpreter fast: A staff person from a language-interpretation office for a state employment office which does interpretation by telephone, needed a "Mennonite interpreter" by the following day. Someone who came to them needing services said his language was "Mennonite." Mennonite Media referred them to the Lancaster (PA.) Mennonite Information Center due to the many speakers of Pennsylvania Dutch in that area.

4. Are Mennonites punctual or late? "What do Mennonites believe about their personal space and the use of touch in that setting? Are Mennonites usually punctual or late to appointments?"

5. Mennonites and Maple Syrup Disease: "I am just learning about Maple Syrup Urine Disease. I found that this mostly happens among Mennonites. So now I am also learning about them as well. I wondered if you could tell me more about their beliefs and how they live?"

6. Not obvious questions: "Is the Bible Mennonites use the same as any other? Can a head covering be worn with regular clothes by a Protestant? Do you "convert" or just decide to become Mennonite? If there isn't a church around, can you teach yourself? Does a Mennonite have to go to a Mennonite church?"

7. Mennonites and stem cell research: "My daughter, who is a sophomore in high school, is in a debate about stem cell research. I was wondering if you have anything … with Mennonite perspectives about this issue."

8. Puppy mills again: "I don't know if it is an approved undertaking or if individuals are responsible, but I hear that there are groups of Mennonites that run puppy mills. Any time animals, such as faithful dogs, are kept in cages piled high with droppings and feet falling through large wire mesh, there is a problem. ... Two words come to mind, greed and callousness."

9. Spiritual maturity: "I am a seminary student and investigating three different communities—16th-century Mennonites being one—as to how they saw spiritual maturity develop a biblically functioning community. Any ideas for original writings would be best."

10. Shunned family: "Can the third generation of a shunned family return to the Mennonites?"

11. Mennonites and conflict: "I am looking for information on how the Mennonites resolve conflicts. I am currently doing a study as a research associate. My main focus is to compare the various conflict-resolution techniques used by different faiths."

12. Simple lifestyle in today's world: "How should a Mennonite discern and understand the simple lifestyle in today's world?

13. Catholic pastor looking for simple lifestyle resources: "I … was told by someone recently that the Mennonite community had some good resources for helping people adopt more 'simplified lifestyles.' Could you possibly direct me to some related information?"

14. Wants to talk: "Over the years I have been drawn to Mennonites. I don't know why. Could you please tell me who to contact near where I live to talk about Mennonite beliefs?"

15. Y U R called Mennonites (original spelling): "I would like to know y u r called Mennonites and where it started. Thank U."

16. Looking for Mennonites: "I live in an isolated rural community 225 miles from the nearest Mennonite church. … How does one such as myself who wishes to become a Mennonite and share a faith community proceed?"

17. Never heard of them before: "I am doing a project for school. I chose the Mennonites because I knew truly nothing about them, never even heard of them, so now I need some extra information."

18. Mennonites and privacy issue: A reporter in Missouri wondered if there were Mennonite groups concerned about pending legislation in that state regarding everyone having to have a photo on their driver's license or ID card.

19. What do you call a Mennonite clergy? "What is the proper form of address for a member of the Mennonite or Anabaptist clergy? Is it Pastor, Reverend or something else? Your prompt response would be appreciated."

20. Rules on marriage: "Are Mennonites allowed to get married?"—*Melodie Davis of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Disability does not stop Seattle woman

Seattle Mennonite Church congregational chair serves from her wheelchair.

From where she sits, Sandra Richardson has a different perspective on what it means to be the chair of her congregation. Richardson, a ceramic artist, was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1990 and uses a motorized wheelchair for mobility.

She's encountered increasing physical losses over the last decades. But those losses have brought their own perspective to her ministry as chair of Seattle Mennonite Church. The congregation is a member of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference. Her wheelchair is a symbol for how she sees her role as chair of the congregation.

"This chair places me in a restful and reflective spot," Richardson says. "But because it is a mobile chair, I also get from one place to another. It helps me understand that it's not my job to set agenda for the congregation. I am in a position to observe, reflect, listen and pray. Just as my motorized chair moves me from one place to another, so I can try to provide that service to the congregation. Just as my chair takes me where I direct it to go, so as congregational chair I try to listen where God is directing the congregation to go."

Richardson's life, though slowed, is hardly motionless. She lives in a cooperative housing project near the church with her husband, Stan, and continues to create her ceramics with the help of an assistant.

Sandra Richardson

"[Chairing a congregation] is not something that I ever thought about doing, and it's never been an area in which I thought I had gifts," she says. "I'm constantly reminded that it's not so much my own skill or giftedness, but that it's God's grace."

Richardson says the call to serve as congregational chair surprised her. It keeps her pushing the edges of her limitations and trusting that God uses whatever she offers.

Richardson grew up in Bally (Pa.) Mennonite Church and attended Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va. She was a substitute art teacher in Seattle's public schools and more recently served, along with Stan, as co-director of Camp Camrec, which is sponsored by the Mennonite churches in Washington.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Kansas couple creates peace magnets

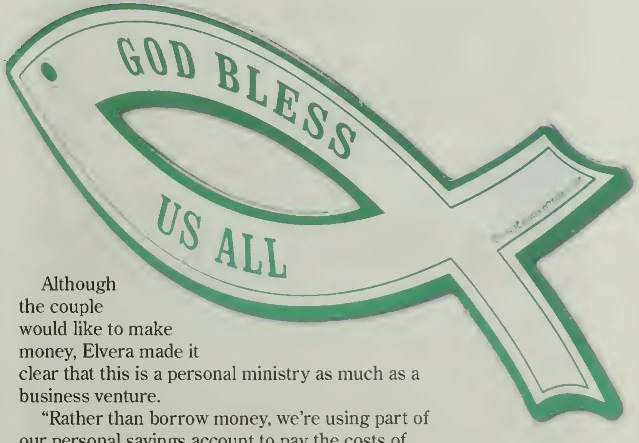
One message says "Support peacemakers" instead of "Support our troops."

Duane and Elvera Johnson grew weary of seeing too many car magnets bearing messages they didn't like, so they created their own product. The Topeka, Kan., residents, members of Southern Hills Mennonite Church, are marketing their own line of magnets as a way to respond to the increasingly popular "ribbon" magnets that many motorists display on their vehicles. The fish-shaped magnets say "God Bless Us All" and "Support Peacemakers" as deliberate responses to the more common ribbon magnets.

"Catch phrases like 'Support Our Troops' and 'God Bless America' promote militarism and uncritical patriotism," Elvera says. "Our peace magnets will give people a chance to express beliefs that … God's will comes before national interests."

Her husband, a former journalist and a freelance writer, says he feels uncomfortable with the "chilling effect" such phrases have on valid criticisms of government policy.

"The slogan 'Support Our Troops' grew out of the debate over whether to invade Afghanistan," Duane says. "Proponents of a military response insisted that while it might be acceptable to argue against going to war, to continue to speak out after the shooting began would be unpatriotic. In other words, the phrase was intended, at least in part, to silence critics of the war."



Although the couple would like to make money, Elvera made it clear that this is a personal ministry as much as a business venture.

"Rather than borrow money, we're using part of our personal savings account to pay the costs of starting the business," she says. They've also agreed to tithe 10 percent of their profits to the peace organization Christian Peacemaker Teams.

To order magnets or for more information, email emerald@eefreelance.com or call 785-267-6386. Suggested retail price is $5.—*Vera Koehn for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Meserete Kristos Church now one of largest in Mennonite World Conference

Mulugeta Zewdie

Last summer, over a spicy platter of injera and watt in a restaurant in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, two Canadian visitors told Tefera Bekere how impressed they were by numerical growth of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC). According to the latest available figures, the church had grown by 10.6 percent in the previous year.

"10.6 percent!" said Tefera, director of the MKC's evangelism department. "We are embarrassed about that. It means we are already stagnant. The assembly will not be happy to hear that. It should be 30 percent."

A few weeks later, with another year's statistics gathered in, delegates to the annual assembly were relieved to hear that the growth rate had not gone down from that first projection but inched up to 12.5 percent. Baptized membership now stands at 120,677, making the Meserete Kristos Church one of the largest denominations in Mennonite World Conference.

Still, Tefera's "embarrassment" reflects some concern in the MKC leadership, now that the church is into its second half-century of existence. Will there be a leveling off—not only in numbers but in spiritual energy? What is happening to the vibrancy of this church that Mennonites around the world know as a church "success" story?

Mulugeta Zewdie, newly elected General Secretary of the MKC, believes that when religious values in the church come to be considered "matters of opinion, personal preference or subjective choice rather than objective [reality]" the church loses its evangelistic power. This is a danger in the Ethiopian church, as its society is influenced by Western culture.

For Mulugeta, the church's mission must stay rooted in the example of the early church, whose strong community life, devotion to the Word, Christ-like character and demonstrations of God's power all worked together to spread the gospel.

"Today, missionaries in the younger churches of Africa and Asia are convinced of the reality of exorcism and the power of healing in the name of Jesus," says Mulugeta. "If the church is to continue to grow, such demonstrations will be at the heart of its ministry."

Mulugeta also recognizes that MKC may be called these days to a greater "biblical balance" in which salvation is understood to include "justice, and the liberation of the forgotten and the poor—a response to misery, chaos, fear and the brutality of community life."

With roots in the ministries of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM), this group of Anabaptists in the Horn of Africa has had an especially exciting ride these last three decades. With a thoroughly indigenous spiritual movement since the 1960s, the church experienced rapid growth during the Marxist regime of 1974 to 1991—especially during the last eight years, when the regime forced the church underground. In the years of freedom since those days, MKC has grown to become the fourth largest Protestant denomination in the country, which is otherwise predominantly Ethiopian Orthodox and Muslim.

A typical Sunday morning service begins with a long prayer time led by a worship leader at a microphone. In response to his or her rising crescendos of prayers invoking God's power, worshipers raise hands and pray out loud—often crying out in divine affection and sometimes speaking in tongues. Some wave hands in motions that depict the pushing back of the forces of evil. Often the prayers are punctuated by the exploding phrase "ba Yesus Kristos SIM!"—"in Jesus Christ's name!"

Robed choirs sing songs composed locally in Ethiopia's pentatonic scale, accompanied by synthesizers and traditional drums and stringed instru-

Meserete Kristos Church

Prison ministry

Four years ago, inhabitants of the town of Alaba Kulito threw stones at a bus whose driver was playing Christian music. The incident marked the beginning of spate of violent acts toward Christians in the "Muslim belt" of southern Ethiopia. Solomon Gebreyes (above), coordinator of the Meserete Kristos Church's prison ministry, was therefore discreet when he approached the authorities of Alaba Kulito's prison two years later to start a ministry to inmates—some of whom had been involved in the violence. During his visit, Solomon noticed that many of the inmates were sick from impure water. So he asked the prison if he could help build a better water system. Soon the prison had a new water tank, and through medical services of the Red Cross, the health of the prisoners improved dramatically. There are now 20 believers in Alaba Kulito's prison. After only three years of operation, MKC has established a presence in 33 of Ethiopia's federal and state prisons.
—Byron Rempel-Burkholder for Meetinghouse

ments. Translated Western songs, common during the earlier missionary era, have virtually disappeared. Preaching, like the songleading, is miked and heavily amplified—and animated.

"Signs and wonders" are not unusual in worship services—where people are delivered from demon possession or illness—where a member may offer a word of "prophecy." These prophecies have included words that God has a special calling for Ethiopians to evangelize the world.

Long prayers: Whether in local churches or at denominational offices and ministries, prayer groups meet often and long. At the MKC College in the capital city of Addis Ababa on a Friday morning, there are no classes because it is a day of prayer and fasting. The chapel is a buzz of students kneeling on cushions on the floor and praying out loud. They stay for hours.

"For us, prayer is a matter of enjoying the presence of God," says college instructor Woudineh Endayelalu. "When you are worshiping and enjoying God, you can pray for five hours and it will seem like only a few minutes."

Hailu Chernet, dean of the college, remembers the intense fasting and exorcisms that were so common in his work as a nurse during the Marxist era. Now, he says, he prays for times of persecution to return so that the church can recover the intensity of the Spirit's movement.

Some sobering growth pains may have contributed to the sense of "cooling" in the church. At the national level, the church has just come through a significant time of conflict resolution over division of authority in church institutions and program.

At the local level, congregations are questioning leadership structures that served well during the time of persecution but may not work so well in times of freedom. Part of that struggle revolves around how much authority elders, pastors and evangelists should have in the congregation.

What will keep the fires alive as the MKC matures as a denomination? According to Mulugeta Zewdie, the key is leadership training.

"In order to evangelize and attain sustainable church growth," Zewdie says, "MKC needs an effective strategy in the area of leadership training. Members are expected to be rooted in the Word of God and equipped for ministry."

Fortunately, MKC has some assets for meeting this challenge. Probably the greatest legacy the missionaries bestowed in the early years was the empowerment of Ethiopian leaders. Within five years of the formation of the MKC in the late 1950s, missionaries handed over the top positions to Ethiopian Christians. That willingness to "work themselves out of a job" was proven by the establishment of the Nazareth Bible Academy and by the generous sponsorship of Ethiopians to American colleges.

Courtesy photo

Worship in the Misrach Church, Addis Ababa's largest MKC congregation

According to Bedru Hussein, past vice president of Mennonite World Conference and currently an administrator at the MKC college, EMM's foresight "has given leaders the authority to lead today. That did not happen with other denominations."

Despite lack of funds to do everything the church would like, training at a national level happens on two parallel tracks. Teaching seminars organized by the MKC head office have the widest reach. Continuing a pattern started during the underground years, the pastoral care department of the national church holds semiannual training conferences in each of MKC's 17 regions. Congregational leaders study a curriculum developed by the department and then teach it to their congregations. The curriculum includes studies of biblical books and topical studies on what the leadership discerns to be key issues for the church.
—Byron Rempel-Burkholder for Meetinghouse

Below: The vast valley of the Meta Robi region is just 125 kilometers east of Addis Ababa, but thousands of subsistence farmers there do not have government services. Since 1988, evangelistic efforts have produced 12 MKC churches and 24 church-planting centers that will eventually become churches. These already form a provisional region among the 16 other regions of the MKC.

Byron Rempel Burkholder

Vietnamese Mennonites still harassed

Ho Chi Minh City Mennonites remain tenacious in their worship, fellowship.

Authorities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, are unyielding in their determination to close the Mennonite Church center in the city's District Two, southeast of the Saigon River. The congregation, which meets in the home of Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, has demonstrated tenacity in continuing to meet to worship God and to receive strength to live their Christian lives.

I am the shepherd of the flock.
—Mrs. Quang

On Nov. 28, 2004, some 30 adults and children were in the service of worship when about 50 security police and administrative personnel from the local precinct arrived, broke up the meeting and issued citations for gathering in an unauthorized meeting. The citations call for a fine. Some of the believers have to borrow money to pay the fines.

Mrs. Quang reported that the authorities asked why she was defying the order not to meet for worship. "I am the shepherd of the flock," she replied. She was again told that the group was not permitted to meet.

The center is located in a new part of Ho Chi Minh City that was rice paddy fields before the war. The center serves as the office of the Vietnam Mennonite Church and is the home of Mrs. Quang, who continues to live there with her three young children. She has assumed some pastoral duties since her husband was arrested in June.

After Quang was arrested, authorities gathered area people to denounce the church. One man claimed that the church welcomed young people to "scream and sing," using amplifiers and drums. Some neighbors might have been disturbed, but it does not appear loud music is a major motivation in the authorities' determination to close the center.

Vietnam's constitution "guarantees" freedom to believe or not to believe and there is much more freedom of religion today than when power was consolidated under the socialist regime in 1975. Six major religions have received legal status, but some Buddhists, Christians (especially house churches) and other believers not affiliated with recognized bodies are frequently harassed.

In Ho Chi Minh and other cities, authorities generally recognize leaders and give tacit agreement for house churches. But when that agreement is withdrawn, the church has no legal basis to continue. The church meeting in Pastor Quang's home experienced a tolerable level of harassment for several years. That changed earlier in 2004 and by October the group was regularly harassed by authorities. In early December 2004, the church divided into groups of 12 or 15 members and began meeting in several locations for worship. However, whenever groups would gather at the center, police continued to come.—*Mennonite World Conference News Service and Vietnamese Ministries report*

GOSHEN MAPLE LEAFS
C
A

Chris Meyer

The puck stops here: new ice hockey team forms at Goshen

While they practice on rollerblades on a gym floor rather than with metal blades on a frozen surface, a 14-member ice hockey team has taken form this fall on the Goshen (Ind.) College campus. Started by students and faculty members, the group is engaged in local league play, calling themselves the Goshen Maple Leafs. The idea for the formation of a competitive team developed last spring out of the campus club Association of Mennonites for Ice and Street Hockey (AMISH) when interested members began to realize that there was enough interest in ice hockey on the campus that they could form their own team. Front row, left to right, are Jonny Meyer, Chris Meyer, Ben Yoder, Josh Weaver,Tom Stahly; back row: Joe Vallejos, John Ross Buschert, Jesse Smith, Jacob Stucky, Eric Meyer, Luke Bishop, Greg Koop, Ben Nafziger, Matt Bauman.—*Goshen College News Service*

CALENDAR

Mennonite Health Assembly, March 10-13, 2005, Orlando, Fla. Sponsored by Mennonite Health Services Alliance. This year's theme is "Thriving in Adverse Conditions: Mission Possible." For more information or to register visit www.mhsonline.org or call Wendy Rohn at 800-611-4007.

The **Glenwood Springs Mennonite Church** invites all former and present members and friends to its 50th-anniversary celebration. Saturday Sept. 12, 2005, 2:00 to 4:30 p.m., 2306 Blake Ave. Glenwood Springs, Colo. May this be a time of uniting our spirit with each other and with Jesus Christ, "Our Chief Cornerstone."

WORKERS

Gingerich, Angela, Milford, Ind., is participating in the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program this year. In December she traveled to Macon, Ga., to build relationships with youth and young adults through the Joshua Cup coffeehouse and the Power House Youth Center.

Klarke, Mercy, Bluffton, Ind., is participating in the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program this year. In December she traveled to Macon, Ga. to build relationships with youth and young adults through the Joshua Cup coffeehouse and the Power House Youth Center.

Marner, Gina, Kalona, Iowa, is participating in the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program this year. In December she traveled to Jakkmokk, Sweden, to assist long-term workers Tom and Disa Rutschman through community outreach, youth ministry and teaching English.

Shanahan, Rebecca, Watsontown, Pa., is participating in the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program this year. In December she traveled to Jakkmokk, Sweden, to assist long-term workers Tom and Disa Rutschman through community outreach, youth ministry and teaching English.

Shumaker, Rebecca, Archbold, Ohio, is participating in the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program this year. In December she traveled to Jakkmokk, Sweden, to assist long-term workers Tom and Disa Rutschman through community outreach, youth ministry and teaching English.

Whitehurst, Kristen, Berne, Ind., is participating in the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) program this year. In December she traveled to Macon, Ga. to build relationships with youth and young adults through the Joshua Cup coffeehouse and the Power House Youth Center.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Albright, Grace Alexis, Nov. 11, to David and Melissa Albright, Coatesville, Pa.

Bush, Mia Ann, Nov. 22, to Timothy and Janice Widrick Bush, Lowville, N.Y.

Davis, Lillian Eva, July 28, to Richard and Tiffani Bender Davis, Mooresville, N.C.

Gingerich, Taylor Raquel, Nov. 9, to Aaron and Joleen Ropp Gingerich, Iowa City, Iowa.

Harmelink, Sarah Kaylyn, Nov. 11, to Erin and Tony Richer Harmelink, Goshen, Ind.

Ingersoll, Grace Elizabeth, Oct. 31, to Adam and Brigette Nisly Ingersoll, Westchester, Calif.

King, Broden Nolan, Nov. 22, to Nolan and Nori King, Cochranville, Pa.

Livezey, Chase Andrew, Dec. 3, to Mark and Anita Derstine Livezey, Harleysville, Pa.

McKean, Adrienne Paige, Nov. 22, to Craig and Erin Lautzenheiser McKean, Berne, Ind.

Platonov, Elizabeth Ann, Oct. 3, to Saha Platonov and Judy Augsburger, Moscow, Russia.

Unruh, McKaleb Lee, Nov. 12, to Chris and Nicole Niehage Unruh, Moundridge, Kan.

Schrock, Luke Samuel, Oct. 31, to Leon and Robin Schlabach Schrock, Iowa City, Iowa.

Stuckey, Ethan Lee, Oct. 26, to Tyson and Angela Wagler Stuckey, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Yoder, Madelyne Jean, Nov. 23, to Brent and Heidi Wenger Yoder, Harrisonburg, Va.

MARRIAGES

Bontz/Roynon: Melinda P. Bontz, Harrisonburg, Va., and Drew J. Roynon, Harrisonburg, Nov. 20 at Liberty Grove United Methodist Church, Burtonsville, Md.

Lauver/Weaver: Miriam Lauver, Mifflintown, Pa., and David Weaver, Jr., McAlisterville, Pa., Dec. 4 at Lost Creek Mennonite Church, Mifflintown.

Siegrist/Smith: Mary E. Landis Siegrist, Intercourse, Pa., and Charles M. Smith, Manheim, Pa., Nov. 27 at Landis Valley Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

DEATHS

Baker, Beverly Compton, 75, Salem, Ore., died Dec. 4 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Harold Baker (deceased). Parents: Clifford and Merle Compton. Children: Evelyn Dankenbring, Margie Downing; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Western Mennonite Church, Salem.

Brunk, Fern Maust, 71, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 3. Spouse: Perry E. Brunk (deceased). Parents: Richard and Lizzie Gunden Maust. Children: Sylvia Reece, Randall, Steven, Janette, Christina vonRotz-Brunk, Anthony; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

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- **1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794**

Clemmer, Alma A., 96, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 5. Spouse: (1st) Leroy Z. Greaser (deceased), (2nd) Norman Clemmer, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Levi and Edna Clemmer Alderfer. Children: Robert A. Greaser, LeRoy A. Greaser, Gladys Rice; step-children Frances Ehst, Norman; 12 grandchildren; 79 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Detter, Wilbur, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 26. Spouse: Clela Detter (deceased). Parents: William and Mary Ann Detter. Child: Billye Miller; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Durst, Roy E., 66, Salisbury, Pa., died Nov. 9. Spouse: Mary Housel Durst. Parents: William and Lettie Jennings Durst. Children: Martin A., Kimberly Haines; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 12 at Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Eitzen, Alvin D., 86, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Dec. 3. Spouse; Lena Baerg Eitzen. Parents: David P. and Elizabeth Nickel Eitzen. Children: Erwin Rempel, Norman Rempel, Barbara Busenitz, Howard; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Lakeview Gospel Church, Mountain Lake.

Frankenfield, Samuel D., 83, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 6. Spouse: Grace Nice Frankenfield. Parents: Raymond and Edna Derstine Frankenfield. Children: Larry, James, Durrell, Diane Williams, Darlene Halteman; 13 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 10 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Gerig, Sylvia Duboise, 95, Lebanon, Ore., died Nov. 22. Spouse: Benjamin Gerig (deceased). Parents: Silvio and Olga DeTallenay Duboise. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Huston-Jost Funeral Home, Lebanon.

Hartzler, Kathryn "Kit", 76, Belleville, Pa., died Oct. 22. Spouse: Paul Hartzler (deceased). Children: Tom Yoder, Larry (deceased), Charles, Wendy Peachey, Janelle Ruby, Rob: 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Hofer, Roland, 81, Freeman, S.D., died Dec. 2. Spouse: Mildred Fast Hofer. Parents: John and Mary Mendel Hofer. Children: John, Charlene Friesen, Karen Wittenberg; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Jantzi, Robert W., 77, Albany, Ore., died Nov. 12 of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Doris Oswald (deceased), (2nd) Anne Smucker. Parents: Royden B. and Anna Gascho Jantzi. Children: Randall, Roberta Egli, Scott, Tami; step-children June Handrich, Ray Smucker; 16 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Lebanon (Ore.) Mennonite Church.

Kanagy, David E., 85, Belleville, Pa., died Nov. 19. Spouse: Ida Kanagy. Parents: Pius and Mary Kanagy. Children: Roy, DaVida, Martha; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Rockville Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Kennell, Travis J., 19, Sarasota, Fla., died Nov. 20 in an accident. Parents: Mervin and Jennie Kennell. Funeral: Nov. 28 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Landis, Jeanette, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 29. Parents: Elwood and Ruth Landis. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Chester Paul, 95, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 1. Spouse: Lydia Yoder Miller (deceased). Parents: Jacob P. and Emma Yoder Miller. Children: Laurel, Arlen; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 4 at Schowalter Villa, Hesston.

Miller, Ora N., 94, Middlebury, Ind., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Barbara Schwartz Miller (deceased). Parents: Noah J.L. and Mattie Miller. Children: Richard, Marvin; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 14 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Miller, Rozetta Ropp, 93, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 3. Spouse: Gordon C. Miller (deceased). Parents: Mose and Katherine Eimen Ropp. Children: Jim, Lyle; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Mishler, Eugene, 49, Hartville, Ohio, died Nov. 22. Parents: Duane and Esther Mishler. Children: Jodi, Jessica. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Moyer, Granville, 89, Sellersville, Pa., died Nov. 28. Spouse: Ella Johnson Moyer. Parents: Joseph and Mabel Groover Moyer. Children: R. Glenn, D. Lee, Steven J.; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 1 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Moyer, Jean Fitzgerald, 73, Lansdale, Pa., died Dec. 7. Spouse: Joseph Moyer (deceased). Parents: Walter and Helen Carr Fitzgerald. Children: Virginia Yost, Linda Tassone; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Lakjer Funeral Home, Lansdale.

Murray, Franklin, 80, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 12. Spouse: Vivian Landis Murray. Parents: Elmer and Lydia Hooley Murray. Children: Colleen K. Sanders, Richard, Paul; one grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 20 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Neff, J. Clarence "Butch", 57, Leola, Pa., died Nov. 24. Parents: Clarence D. and Mabel Neff. Children: Tina Kreger, Lori Matthews; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 30 in Lancaster, Pa.

Nissley, Nancy Bowers, 71, Wellman, Iowa, died Dec. 4 of cancer. Spouse: Richard Enfield. Parents: Maynard and Silence Norenberg. Children: Eugene, John, Terry, Lacey, Randy, Mervin; two step-children; nine grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; seven step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Lensing Funeral Home, Iowa City.

Patterson, Nellie F. Hughes Shrimplin, 86, Canton, Ohio, died Oct. 28. Spouse: (1st) Lawrence Shrimplin (deceased), (2nd) Fred Patterson (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Lulu Rivers Hughes. Children: Fred Newnham, Ronnie Newnham, Bill Shrimplin, Wayne, Bobby Huprick, Kenny Huprick, Judee Reed, Jan Slone, Nancy Raber, Karen Erb. Funeral: Dec. 2 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio.

Rohrer, Lorraine Burkhart, 73, Manheim, Pa., died Dec. 3. Spouse: J. Lloyd Rohrer. Parents: Ray and Barbara Buch Burkhart. Children: Dennis L., Larry B., Dwight E., Beth L.; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 7 in Lancaster, Pa.

Schierling, Ann D. Regehr, 91, Inman, Kan., died Aug. 18. Spouse: Frank Schierling. Parents: Jacob J. and Helena Dirksen Regehr. Children: Dolores Eby, Darleen Hasler, Diane Thiessen, Connie Epp; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 22 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Schierling, Minnie R., 96, Inman, Kan., died Nov. 6. Spouse: Bernhard T. Schierling. Parents: Johann and Margaretha Hahn. Children: Margaret Ann Watts, Don; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Slagel, Ruby, 91, died Oct. 10. Parents: Elmer and Sarah Slagel. Funeral: Oct. 13 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Ashley, Mich.

Stiles, Mary Steria, 84, Croghan, N.Y., died Nov. 16. Spouse: Earl Stiles (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Leah Martin Steria. Child: Betty Jean Revette; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 20 at Crohgan Mennonite Church.

Walks Along, Joseph, 73, Lame Deer, Mont., died Dec. 1. Spouse: Victoria Long Jaw. Father: Hugh Walks Along. Children: Sharon Three Fingers, James, William, David, Victor, John, Isaac, Joseph; adopted children Steve Brady, Fred Rausch; 29 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 6 at Lame Deer Allen Rowland Gymnasium.

Yoder, Erma Steingass, 77, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 3. Spouse: Ernest Yoder. Parents: William and Sarah Roehrig Steingass. Children: Marie Yoder Dyck, Edward, Jane Rodriguez; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 6 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, Katherine R., 79, Belleville, Pa., died Dec. 5. Parents: Samuel M. and Rachel T. Yoder. Funeral: Dec. 9 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Zook, Esther Neff, 80, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 4. Spouse: Allen Zook. Parents: Mahlon and Mary Kauffman Neff. Children: David, Elaine Barge, Donna Rutter; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 7 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Germantown Mennonite Church in Philadelphia seeks candidate for ***full-time pastor*** to begin summer 2005. Candidate should have strong commitment to Anabaptist beliefs, concern for issues of peace and justice and have appropriate academic and experience credentials. GMC is an urban, diverse congregation of 100+ members and welcomes nontraditional applicants. To receive congregational profile or indicate interest, reply to Search Committee, Germantown Mennonite Church, 21 W. Washington Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19144 or GermantownMennonite@juno.com

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***F/T short-term missions director*** to serve as vision carrier for EMM's short-term discipleship training and missions. Qualifications: experience in short- or long-term missions, good interpersonal skills with the postmodern generation, passion for EMM's vision, leadership skills and strong initiative. College degree preferred. Begins as soon as possible after March 7. Contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717 898-2251) by Feb. 4.

You are a ***licensed practical nurse or RN*** who wants to get back to hands-on nursing in a small, home-like setting. You long for the time and support to actually engage your patients. You'd rather work deeply with 10 patients than superficially with 30. Your dream is to be part of a team that nurtures emotional and spiritual healing even when physical health declines. You have at least three years experience in AIDS or hospice care and are licensed in D.C. You want to grow in your ability to accompany—with exquisite attention and skillful compassion—those who are facing the end of their lives.

We are **Joseph's House,** a small home in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Our mission is to provide a refuge for men who are destitute and suffering from end-stage AIDS and cancer. For 14 years our diverse community of caregivers and volunteers has provided love, companionship and care at the end of life. Joseph's House offers a competitive salary, generous benefits and a place where lovingkindness is practiced as a healer's art. All shifts available.

For more information, please contact Patricia Wudel, Executive Director, at 202-265-7174. Or send resumé to patty@josephshouse.org or fax 202-234-8195.

Norristown New Life, a 115-member urban, multicultural, Spanish/English congregation is seeking a ***half-time (2.5 days per week) bilingual Hispanic associate pastor*** to serve as a member of our pastoral leadership team.

We are prayerfully seeking someone who is able to work with a leadership team, has a passion for evangelism and community outreach, is gifted in both preaching and teaching, has a vision for urban church growth, is flexible and spiritually mature and has an Anabaptist understanding and commitment.

For more information contact Norristown New Life, 3 E. Marshall St., Norristown, PA19401; 610-279-5433; email NNL3@Juno.com; attention Admino Oritz, search committee chair.

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary seeks ***four event pastors,*** two male and two female, for !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth. The position is full-time for one of two dates: June 6-July 2 or July 8-Aug. 6, 2005. These pastors will accompany the 15 high school participants for their intensive 18-day group experience. Qualifications include several years experience as a congregational pastor and working with youth; ability to nurture youth through times of spiritual, intellectual and emotional growth; creativity in styles of worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines; knowledge of and commitment to the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and an undergraduate degree with additional seminary education preferred. Responsibilities include assisting in preparations for the youths' group experience, leading and directing worship and discussions and being physically, emotionally and mentally present with youth during this experience. To apply, send resumé and letter of application by Feb. 15 to Andy Brubacher Kaethler, !Explore Director, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, andybk@ambs.edu. A complete job description is available on the AMBS Web site: www.ambs.edu/!Explore.

Camp Mennoscah director: **Western District Conference** is seeking a full-time director for Camp Mennoscah beginning no later than March 1, 2005. Salary, benefits (including housing, utilities and some meals). Contact Dorothy Nickel Friesen, conference minister, at 316-283-6300 or dorothynf@mennowdc.org for job application—due back by Jan. 15.

Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite sponsored school with 350 students from K3 thru G8, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire summer 2005. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News, VA 23602; or LJShowalter@aol.com.

Iowa Mennonite School employment opportunities beginning August 2005:

Music instructor: IMS is a grade 9-12 school with a strong music tradition. The position includes responsibilities for teaching an introductory music class, three choral ensembles and symphonic band. Leading a community choir has also been a part of this position.

Bible instructor: The Bible instructor at IMS teaches Old and New Testament survey courses, church history and senior Bible. Responsibilities also include chapel planning and spiritual counsel. The position could be a shared position.

To request further information, contact Wilbur Yoder, Principal, Iowa Mennonite School, 1421 540th St., Kalona, IA 52247 or wyoder@yahoo.com.

Harrisonburg Mennonite Church seeks a ***full-time minister of administration*** to provide leadership and administration of financial and daily operations, facilities, human resources and office staff. Qualifications include a strong Christian faith, commitment to HMC's mission and vision, demonstrated skill in organizational management, verbal and written communications, team building, supervision, budget and information systems. Bachelor's degree strongly preferred. Salary and benefit package commensurate with Mennonite Church USA guidelines. Submit resumé by Jan. 15 to HMC Search Committee, 1552 S. High St., Harrisonburg, VA 22801, or email searchcommittee@hmcchurch.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Pastor of Discipleship Ministry

VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Sannich Community Church (Mennonite Brethren) is seeking a Pastor of Discipleship Ministry to enhance and extend the ministry led by the current Pastor. A primary focus of this new position will be to strengthen the capacity of the congregation in **small group**, **equipping**, and **care-giving** ministries. The position will report to Church Council.

Surrounded by vast natural beauty, Saanich Community Church has been sent to live out God's mission in a challenging, West Coast, urban environment. We seek someone with creative ideas about the church and a willingness to lead through the context of relationships.

Details of the position, together with a profile of the church, are posted on the SCC website (www.saanichcommunity.ca). The deadline for applications is February 25th, 2005. SCC reserves the right to continue the search until the position is filled.

Both men and women are encouraged to apply. Applicants should send a CV, philosophy of ministry statement, and letter outlining their suitability for the position to the Chair of the Pastoral Search Committee:

Ben Stobbe, PSC Chair
Saanich Community Church
4566 W Saanich Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 3G4
info@saanichcommunity.ca

saanich
COMMUNITY CHURCH
MENNONITE BRETHREN

Director of development: **Spruce Lake Retreat,** a dynamic, multifaceted camp ministry serving 26,000 people annually and affiliated with the Mennonite Church, seeks mission-minded person for full-time position.

The director of development is responsible for overseeing the fund-raising and development activities that help sustain and advance the ministry. Currently Spruce Lake is in the midst of a major capital campaign and has a number of annual fund-raising events and initiatives. The ideal candidate will be a passionate advocate of Christian camping, be connected with the Mennonite Church, possess outstanding relational and communication skills and have the energy and vision to advocate strongly for this ministry.

Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available, or this person may choose to work out of their own home if situated in the eastern half of Pennsylvania. Spruce Lake is located on 370 scenic acres in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pa. Send resumé to Executive Director, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email director@sprucelake.org.

***Director of athletics*, Eastern Mennonite University.** Responsible for all aspects of the intercollegiate athletic program. The director oversees the efficient management of fiscal resources and facilities, demonstrates a commitment to academic integrity, gender equity, diversity and complies with Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and regulations. Advanced degree in physical education, sport management, educational administration or related field. Master's required; doctorate preferred. Minimum five years work experience in athletic administration or a related educational field with experience in fund raising preferred. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Beginning date: July 1, 2005. Review of applications will begin on Jan. 15. Application materials are available via the Internet at www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/adm-dirofathletics. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Mennonite Central Committee seeks a couple for a ***three-year assignment in Iran*** as part of a student exchange. Interest in studying Islam is essential and a degree in religious studies, including Anabaptist theology and history is preferred. Visit www.mcc.org/servicetree to view the "Iran Student Exchange" job description. Contact your nearest MCC office or Goldie Kuhns at 717-859-1151 or gpk@mcc.org for an application.

Position: The four-year Interpreter Training Program located in the **Department of Modern Classical Languages and Literatures at Goshen College** is seeking an ***assistant professor.*** Appointment begins fall 2005. Applications will be reviewed Feb.15, and will continue until the position is filled. Faculty responsibilities begin Aug.15.

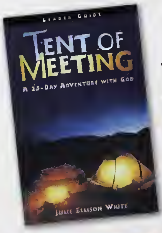
Qualifications: A master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred, in linguistics, education, sign language interpreting or a related field; prefer someone with multicultural experience; ASLTA certification or working toward certification. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit both strong professional and teaching credentials.

Skills: Excellent aptitude and ability in second-language teaching.

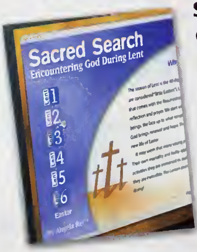
The college: Goshen College is a four-year liberal arts institution dedicated to the development of informed, articulate, sensitive and responsible Christians. As a ministry of the Mennonite Church, the college seeks to integrate Christian values with educational and professional life. Education is viewed as a moral activity that produces servant leaders for the church and world.

To apply: Please send a letter of application, resumé and three professional or business letters of reference by email, fax or postal mail to Minerva Andriotis, Administrative Assistant for Human Resources, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526-4795, telephone 574-535-7707, fax 574-535-7060, email hr@goshen.edu. Complete the online Personnel Information Form. Women and minority people are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

Spirituality resources *for youth*



Tent of Meeting: A 25-day Adventure with God, by Julie Ellison White, teaches youth spiritual disciplines, and invites them into the holy habit of "hanging out" with God. Leader: $9.99 US, $13.99 CAN; Student journal: $7.99 US, $11.29 CAN



Sacred Search: Encountering God during Lent, by Angela Reed, invites youth to know God, themselves, and others in deeper ways by doing a kind of "internal housekeeping" during Lent. Six sessions, plus an Easter celebration. $14.99 US, $20.99 CAN

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Religion and the Death Penalty: A Call for Reckoning, edited by Erik C. Owens, John D. Carlson and Eric P. Elshtain (Eerdmans, 2004, $28), brings thoughtful religious reflection to bear on current challenges facing the capital justice system. The contributors include leaders from the academy, government and public life and represent Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith commitments.

The Healing Power of Hope and **The Healing Power of Love** by Jean Maalouf (Twenty-Third Publications, 2004, $9.95 each) are part of a series that looks at essential elements in the human experience.

Finding Time for the Timeless: Spirituality in the Workweek by John McQuiston II (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2004, $17.99) is a collection of real-life stories of everyday spiritual practices people use to free themselves from the work and worry mindset of today's culture.

Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers by Chap Clark (Baker Academic, 2004, $16.99) states that today's adolescents operate within an environment in which adults have largely abdicated their responsibility to mold and shape teenagers' everyday lives. As a result, the behaviors once associated with the adolescent fringe—sexual promiscuity, for example—have become the norm in contemporary youth culture.

Reconciliation for the 21st Century (LeadersGIFTS, 2004, $69.99) is a series of five videos featuring Myron S. Augsburger. The Mennonite evangelist presents the centrality of reconciliation to the gospel message and to discipleship. To order, visit www.LeadersGifts.com, call 717-371-3713 or email orders@LeadersGifts.com.

Coffee, Corn and the Cost of Globalization (MCC, 2004, free loan) is a new 17-minute video that tells how two communities in Mexico have been affected by globalization. It is available from Mennonite Central Committee, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501, 888-563-4676.

The Sacred Art of Chant: Preparing to Practice by Ana Hernández (SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2004, $15.99) explains how everyone has the ability to create sacred sounds, no matter what their religious background or vocal ability.

Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations by Michael Wyschogrod (Eerdmans, 2004, $24) captures the broad scope of Wyschogrod's work on Judaism and the Jewish-Christian encounter, collecting seminal essays, articles and reviews that address such topics as the God of Abraham and the God of philosophy, sin and atonement, Judaism and the land, the Six-Day War, Paul on Jews and Gentiles and the theology of Karl Barth.

Deerflies by Jeff Gundy (WordTech Editions, 2004, $17) is the Mennonite poet's new collection of poems, which won the Editions Poetry Prize. Gundy teaches English at Bluffton (Ohio) University. To order, visit www.wordtechweb.com/gundy.html.

Soli Deo Gloria: A Daily Walk Through Romans by Myron S. Augsburger (Herald Press, 2004, $15.99, $11.99 paper) includes a devotional page for each day of the year reflecting on a verse from Romans.

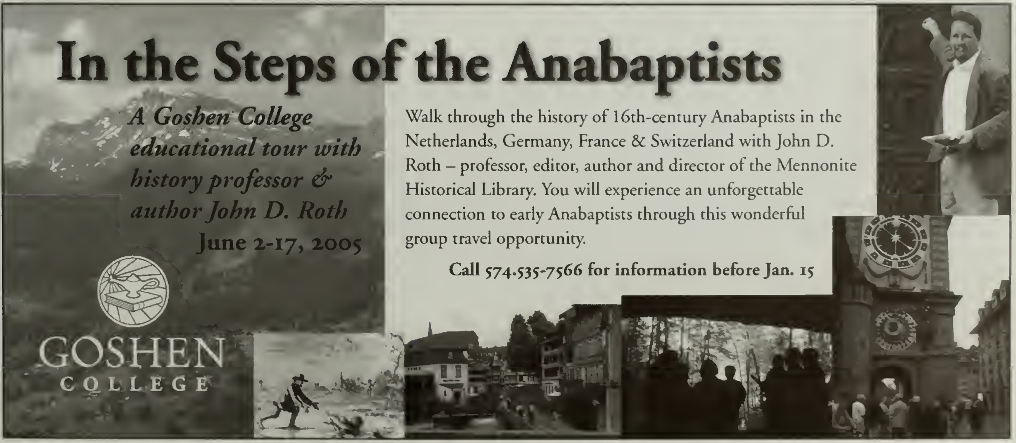
The Hope Factor: Engaging the Church in the HIV/AIDS Crisis, edited by Tetsunao Yamamori, David Dageforde and Tina Bruner (World Vision Resources, 2004, $15.19), brings together Christian thinkers and practitioners who are fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic around the world. The authors outline the extent of this global crisis, provide case studies detailing noteworthy interventions and offer biblical reflections on HIV/AIDS. To order, visit www.worldvisionresources.com or email wvresources@worldvision.org.

Useless Beauty: Ecclesiastes Through the Lens of Contemporary Film by Robert K. Johnston (Baker Academic, 2004, $17.99) places films, the biblical book of Ecclesiastes and the contemporary context into a dialogue in order to elicit the continuing power of the biblical text for faith and life.

Tortured Wonders: Christian Spirituality for People, Not Angels by Rodney Clapp (Brazos Press, 2004, $21.99) explores Christian spirituality not just at prayer and worship but at the table, in the bedroom and bathroom and gym and funeral parlor. It unpacks a faith and way of life that "never gives up on the body."

The Sound of Sheer Silence and the Killing State: The Death Penalty and the Bible by Millard Lind (Cascadia Publishing House, 2004, $18.95) traces Yahweh's saving action and steadfast love for Israel and the world from Moses to Elijah to Jesus, then shows how they are to be emulated on the societal level by obedience to a covenant law within which capital punishment is contrary to God's purposes.

Loving Without Giving In: Christian Responses to Terrorism and Tyranny by Ron Mock (Cascadia Publishing House, 2004, $22.95) asks how Christians can love their neighbors and enemies at the same time.


In the Steps of the Anabaptists

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GOSHEN
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We can learn from others and share the risk

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Health-care Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu.

When I talk to groups about lobbying our government for health-care reform, I often hear, "I don't want socialized medicine like they have in Canada." I alternate between being surprised that people assume "universal coverage" is code language for a Canadian-like system (as if the Canadian system is the only way to achieve universal access) and that Americans are so ill-informed about the health-care system of our neighbors to the north.

The Canadian health-care system is not "socialized medicine," a point underscored in Robert LeBow's *Health Care Meltdown: Confronting the Myths and Fixing Our Failing System* (Alan C. Hood & Co., 2004). Each province serves as a single payer for its residents, but the delivery system is mainly private, and people have extensive choice in selecting their providers. Canadians sometimes wait for nonemergency procedures, but those waits are seldom excessive, and the trade-off is that everyone has coverage. The Canadian system does better than ours at controlling costs, including drug prices. Their health outcomes are better, and Canadians are seldom forced to leave the hospital prematurely.

The current situation is unjust. We need a system where risk is shared by all 280 million U.S. citizens.

Most Canadians are proud of their health-care system. They are also puzzled that our system is so broken. Their system is not perfect, due in part to chronic underfunding during a previous government's administration. Still, Canada's system bears little resemblance to denouncements about socialized medicine, and we have much to learn from them about providing health-care access.

We have much to learn from other countries, too. As Timothy Stoltzfus Jost points out in "Why can't we do what they do? National Health Reform Abroad" (*Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, Fall 2004), all developed nations besides the United States provide health care for all or nearly all their residents. This includes countries in Asia, the Pacific rim, South America and Europe, including countries far less wealthy than we are. Despite spending less per person on health care, however, many have better health outcomes than we do.

An awareness of this global reality gives us something to say to our government: Learn from other nations. It is the height of arrogance to assume that we have nothing to learn from others, to assume that our context is so different, that we need a unique, American solution to providing access to health care. Most developed countries have adopted variations on two basic models of health insurance, called social insurance and national health insurance. We should urge our government to learn from these variations. What works? What doesn't work? What features of these variations might be adopted here?

Another thing to say to our government is that our system must be reformed so that risk is shared by everyone. Such risk sharing can be achieved in various ways. For example, in Germany it occurs through a "risk-equalization scheme" where "health plans that have younger and less costly members must transfer money … to the plans that have older and more expensive patients," writes Jost. In our country, Medicare is a good example of sharing risk through a single risk pool: Everyone age 65 and older is eligible and enrollment is automatic, regardless of risk factors such as preexisting conditions and occupation.

By contrast, lack of such risk-sharing is a main reason so many in our country are underinsured or lack health insurance entirely. In our current system, insurance companies strive to determine which groups and individuals are a low risk for needing medical care. Because these folks are a lower risk, insurance companies can charge them less, which protects them from inflated premiums and, among other benefits, helps businesses with young, healthy employees remain competitive by controlling insurance costs. But there is a dark side to this risk-adjusting reality: Insurance companies try to determine which groups and individuals are at a higher risk of needing medical care due to background, behavior or preexisting medical conditions, then raise health-insurance premiums for those higher-risk individuals and groups or exclude them entirely from insurance coverage. The result is that those most likely to need medical care (including small businesses with older employees, the poor and the already sick) are least able to acquire coverage.

The current situation is unjust. We need a system where risk is shared by all 280 million U.S. citizens. Risk broadly shared does not place undue burden on any group and is an important component of moving toward access for everyone. That such risk-sharing is possible can be seen in places such as Germany and in our own Medicare system.

"Learn from other nations," and "reform the system so that everyone shares the risk" are only two things to say to our government about reforming health care. But they are an important two. TM

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Everett J. Thomas

A watershed year

This will be a watershed year for Mennonite Church USA; the high point will be the gathering in Charlotte, N.C., in July. Rain that has fallen on this side of the divide runs into our history. Experiences that fall on our fledgling denomination after Charlotte 2005 will flow into our future.

There are at least three reasons why members of Mennonite Church USA might consider attending this watershed event, even if not registered as a delegate or serving as a youth group sponsor:

- This will be the first gathering where we will know who we are (who will be members) as a new denomination.
- Our connections will be stronger across the denomination if more congregations send participants.
- This may be the last time Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA meet with delegate bodies and youth conventions together.

Who we are: When General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) delegates voted at Nashville 2001 to form Mennonite Church USA, they gave area conferences until 2007 to decide about membership. But as James Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA said last summer while the Executive Board was meeting in Charlotte, “I believe that when we get here next summer, we will have no provisional conferences and no one will have dropped out … two years early.”

This summer at Charlotte 2005, we will mark the end of the beginning of our new denomination.

Last year, three of the four undecided conferences voted to join Mennonite Church USA: Lancaster (Pa.), New York and South Central. In North Central Conference, leaders have endorsed membership; the group will vote just before the Charlotte convention.

This means that when we gather as Mennonite Church USA next summer, delegates will sit together with certainty about each other, knowing that everyone in the conversation has made a commitment to Mennonite Church USA. Without tiptoeing around each other (for fear that misunderstandings will contribute to some not becoming members), we will get our first experience in a denominational culture created by new people at the table.

Congregational delegates are new to most Mennonite Church USA members, since the majority comes from a Mennonite Church polity that entrusted churchwide decision-making to a small group of conference delegates. After Atlanta 2003, when many MCs experienced such representation for the first time, members of congregations who sat as delegates returned to churches and described what our denomination was about in their own words. No other channel of communication can as effectively spread the vitality and viability of our church.

Mennonite Church Canada decided to hold its annual meeting with Mennonite Church USA in Charlotte. There is a possibility that this could be the last such binational gathering. First, there seems to be little inclination on the part of Mennonite Church USA to travel to Canada for its biennial convention in the future when 90 percent of registrants are from the United States. One viable model for a gathering in Canada would require separating the youth convention from the event—but there is significant resistance to such bifurcation from some quarters. Second, there is less and less binational structure bridging the two denominations. Leaders in both countries have now closed the meetings of the Joint Executive Committee (the next meeting is in late February; neither *The Mennonite* nor *Canadian Mennonite* will cover this meeting) because JEC meetings have become mostly a place for consultation—rather than a place to take actions as supervisors of binational programs. So, without more binational programs, there will be less reason for the two national churches to meet together.

Even with good reasons, the time and expense for a one-week convention can be formidable. But think of it as a vacation spent going to church. For six days, we will worship, eat, learn and discern together. In 2001, delegates and leaders took a beginning step in the creation of our new denomination. This summer at Charlotte 2005, we will mark the end of the beginning.—*ejt*

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Dreaming of lavender fields

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

Someday I want to see the lavender in bloom in the south of France. I want to revel in field after field of delicate purple flowers waving in the sunshine and smell their pungent perfume. For me to articulate that dream may not seem like a big deal, but for me it is huge. You see, until last month I had stopped dreaming.

When I was told that I had cancer, I think I gave up and prepared for the end. I felt I had accomplished in life what God had asked of me, and I was ready to die. When a person is in that frame of mind, dreaming doesn't even enter the picture. I realize now that for the previous three years I would not allow myself to dream.

However, I didn't even notice I wasn't dreaming. Life seemed to go on as normal, though the road seemed heavy going. Not until I went to a pastor's meeting and someone placed several stems of lavender on the table did something come out of my mouth that shocked me. I said I wanted to make a journey to France someday to see the lavender fields.

> God has not given up on this world or this people, so why do we give up?

In that instant I knew something had changed within me. I knew that dreaming was a deviation from the way I had been living my life to that point. When I was able to pinpoint the time I stopped dreaming, I discovered what I had given up along the way in my journey with cancer. I also understood that the loss had been much greater than I had realized.

A dream gives us a north star to walk toward and guide our journey. A dream gives us momentum and excitement, just to see what God is going to do. A dream calls us onward rather than sitting still. A dream is an expression of faith in the continuity of life and God's presence. Dreaming is essential to health and faith.

Now I look around and I wonder who else is not dreaming? Sometimes we do not dream because survival is difficult enough. It is the unique person who has the ability to dream when enduring economic distress or a health crisis. People in such places usually have been battered to a state where dreaming is unlikely. Sometimes we do not dream because we feel guilty about what we already have. To dream is to expect more, and God has already given us so much. Sometimes we do not dream because a dream requires that we give a part of our heart to the dream for it to have life. Usually we prefer just to hang on to what we've got rather than give part of ourselves away.

I discovered that life without a dream is not living at all. Instead life becomes merely the duty to do good and be good just as God would have us be. That kind of life values faithfulness over joy, reaching the goal rather than valuing the journey. It is the heavy footfall of the faithful church worker rather than the dance of delight of God's child.

I can't help but have faith that God wants us to dream about how we will use the abundance we have been given. God wants us to dream about how we can best use our church buildings, colleges, universities and seminaries. We should also dream about the fruit of our relationship with God and its effect on racism and economic injustice in our communities. God has not given up on this world or this people, so why do we give up?

As a church, as congregations and as individuals, we need a dream. I pray that God intrigue our minds, energy and faith with a new dream.

God is still dreaming about the possibilities of relationship with a people that call him God of all creation. A vision of God's world still glints in God's eye. I dream of dancing with delight in God's lavender fields of France. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Nationalism is golden calf

Douglas Kaufman identified me as having reported on the World Council of Churches assembly ("Disciples Like Jesus," Dec. 21, 2004). I covered the assemblies at Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975 and Canberra, Australia, in 1991. I was not present at Vancouver in 1983.

Kaufman remembers that I "didn't sound real enthusiastic about" the assembly. It may be that he is referring to my comments on the Canberra assembly, which took an action to oppose all war and then rescinded the action after four hours. I have been interested in international meetings such as the World Council, Mennonite World Conference and others because they bring people together across national lines and thus make a statement against nationalism—that golden calf worshiped by many Christians. But nationalism is difficult to oppose. Also it was sometimes hard to make my point clear. I seem to remember that one congregation cancelled their *Gospel Herald* Every Home Plan because I so much as reported on the Nairobi assembly.*—Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

God names himself

Though angered and deeply saddened when we read Karl Landis' Speaking Out "God Names Himself" (Dec. 7, 2004), we are hoping it will open the door to discussion on an issue that is dear to our hearts. Landis is correct in saying that God is beyond sexuality, that the biblical writers did write for patriarchal audiences and that women and girls feel excluded and limited in the Christian community when we use only male names and pronouns for God. Those reasons alone are enough to persuade us to use a variety of names for God. But Landis did not address two other compelling reasons: the danger of idolatry and the pursuit of justice.

We commit idolatry when we make our mysterious, unfathomable Creator into a finite, human being. God is not an old man sitting up in heaven. God is greater than our small minds can begin to imagine. When we limit our images to masculine ones, we are worshiping a golden calf. Is Landis arguing that we should never use images that are not straight from the Bible?

The second convincing reason to use both masculine and feminine images for God is because we are a people of justice. Language is powerful and formative in any community. When we hear only male language for God, there is a subtle message that male is normative and female somehow less than. I long for the day when the church is no longer part of an oppressive system that sets one group of people up to be superior to another. The message I want my sons and nieces to hear from the church is one of reconciliation and justice, not oppression and domination.*—Jill H. Kaufman, Jeanine Kaufman, Doug Kaufman, Nadine Zook Miller, Goshen, Ind.*

In response to the Speaking Out by Karl Landis (Dec. 7, 2004) I want to ask four questions:
(1) Since God is beyond sexuality, do we need to use exclusively male pronouns in speaking of God, which has the effect of implying God is male?
(2) Does God really "name himself" or does God try to meet humankind in a given culture setting and use language and images that communicate with the hearers in that setting? (3) How will the church empower women (or men) leaders who have had negative experiences with a human father and cannot move past only masculine language and images for God? (4) Do we run the risk of trying to control God by limiting the "names" or metaphors we use for God? Is our God really so small as to be uncomfortable with feminine symbolic language (Psalm 131:2, Luke 13:34)?

Instead of limiting our address of God, Jesus intended to open the way to a warm and personal relationship with God that may, in fact, be like the relationship many people have with a mother.
—James M. Lapp, Harleysville, Pa.

Karl Landis' comment that "Jesus introduced the notion of God as Father" was especially relevant this past Christmas season. Mary was Jesus' mother and God/Spirit was his father. However, Landis failed to recognized that meanings of words change over time and culture. For instance, calling God "President Jesus" is more relevant for me as an American than calling him "King." In the context when people referred to God and/or Jesus as "King," it showed a higher allegiance to God and

IN THIS ISSUE

For more than 30 years now, women have been ordained to pastoral ministry in Mennonite congregations in North America. Meetinghouse—a group of editors from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations in Canada and the United States—decided to survey the state of women in ministry in our respective denominations (page 8). As Paul Schrag notes, Mennonite Church USA's percentage of women in pastoral ministry is growing. But Diane Zaerr Brenneman, Mennonite Church USA staff person in the ministerial leadership office, says, "Women still aren't being called like men" (page 10). Anne Stuckey held the same denominational minister position as Diane in the former Mennonite Church, and we now welcome Stuckey as a regular contributor to our Grace and Truth column (page 2). And for those whose New Year's resolutions include more physical and spiritual exercise, we offer Layton Friesen's article "An Ode to Walking" (page 14).*—Editors*

Jesus than to their political ruler. It feels so good that I can call God "Father," which in my experience means good provider and "Mother," who is warm and cares for me personally.

Some of us dads gave the term "father" a bad name; it is illogical that we men insist that people need to use our name when referring to God. —*Melvin Meyer Esh, Philadelphia, Pa.*

I have been dismayed by the ongoing conversation about gendered language for God—not specifically as it has played out in the pages of *The Mennonite* in recent months—but more generally as it has been hashed and rehashed in countless Christian settings. I offer a different perspective as one who upholds the traditional Trinitarian formula of "Father, Son, Holy Spirit" but does so with fear and trembling.

What is at stake is not that women feel they are left out. What is at stake, rather, is centuries of sustained disempowerment of women in Christian practices and church structures. This history of concrete injustice has shaped the very self-understanding of the Christian church. Men, especially, who are engaged in the debate about masculine language for God need to take this history into account and give up the condescending notion that it's only about women feeling left out. Until men in the "Father" camp use their power to confront these injustices, their earnest appeals to tradition will seem anything but innocent. And until men in the "inclusive language" camp stop giving impassioned monologues about the "full participation of women"—in the course of which they interrupt, talk over or patronize actual women—their claims of solidarity will ring false.—*Sarah Morice Brubaker, South Bend, Ind.*

Lamb-centered eschatology

I appreciated Ted Lewis' "Lamb-centered" eschatology (Nov. 16 and Dec. 7, 2004). I find it hard to believe that throughout all of time and space, God would particularly enlighten only Dallas Theological Seminary prototypes (who have heretofore shown no particular signs of prophetic accuracy) with the specifics of eschatological detail. And I often wonder why other Christians make such a hobby of eschatology in these distracted times without acknowledging this warning, which I quote from the Book of Revelation: "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

I don't wish these verses to be applied against anybody, but I imagine Ted Lewis has much less to fear than Jerry Jenkins or Tim LaHaye if for no other reason than that the latter duo has become filthy rich off the proceeds of their prophecy.—*Paul R. Schlitz Jr., Baltimore*

Medicine can be answer to prayer

Re Karl McKinney's Grace and Truth column on Dec. 7, 2004: Please, brother Karl, do not set up calling on the Lord for help as the opposite of obtaining medical treatment for depression. There is already enough stigma against depression and other mental illnesses. Stigma is a very real barrier that prevents many people from seeking help for suffering that is medically treatable. We do not need our brothers and sisters in the church disparaging medical treatment for depression as seeking a pill instead of seeking the Lord. When it is medication that we need, calling on the Lord instead of getting medical help can block us from getting the healing the Lord has in store for us and worsen our despair. Those very pills can be an answer to prayer.

Some of us have called on the Lord for years asking for help with depression. Accepting God's gracious gift of a capable psychiatrist and the right antidepressant medications can be a step of faithfulness.—*Christine Guth, Goshen, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Epiphany is celebrated by many Christians each year on Jan. 6. Our congregation

○ celebrates Epiphany (52%)

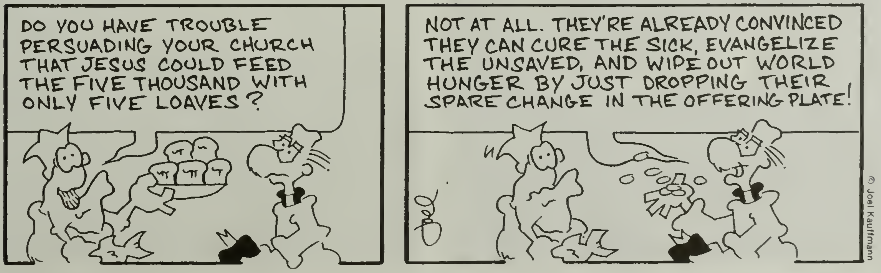
○ does not celebrate Epiphany (30%)

○ What is Epiphany? (18%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Correction: "Holy Migrations" (Readers Say, Jan. 4) was written by Vern, not Kathrine, Rempel.

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE PERSUADING YOUR CHURCH THAT JESUS COULD FEED THE FIVE THOUSAND WITH ONLY FIVE LOAVES?
NOT AT ALL. THEY'RE ALREADY CONVINCED THEY CAN CURE THE SICK, EVANGELIZE THE UNSAVED, AND WIPE OUT WORLD HUNGER BY JUST DROPPING THEIR SPARE CHANGE IN THE OFFERING PLATE!
© Joel Kauffmann

IN BRIEF

Degan named book editor at Herald Press

Michael Degan of Exton, Pa., began in November 2004 as book editor of Herald Press, working out of offices located at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference. For the past 11 years, he worked as a writer and assignment editor for *TV Guide Magazine* in Radnor, Pa. He began his career as a reporter at local newspapers in Philadelphia and its suburbs. Degan, a member of Frazer (Pa.) Mennonite Church, replaces Sarah Kehrberg, who resigned to give greater time to her young daughter and family.—*Levi Miller*

Juries acquit peace activists

Two juries acquitted eight peace activists of criminal trespass in trials Dec. 10, 14, 2004, in Minneapolis. On six occasions last summer, members of AlliantACTION tried to deliver documents citing international treaties that condemn the manufacturing of indiscriminate weapons to executives of Alliant TechSystems in Edina, Minn., which is the U.S. Army's largest supplier of ammunition and has manufactured anti-personnel land mines, cluster bombs and depleted uranium. Defendant Steve Clemens called the acquittals "a victory for conscience and international law." —*National Catholic Reporter*

India missionary S. Paul Miller dies at 88

GOSHEN, Ind.—S. Paul Miller, who served the church in India for more than 40 years through Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM), died Dec. 22, 2004, at Greencroft Healthcare in Goshen. He was 88.

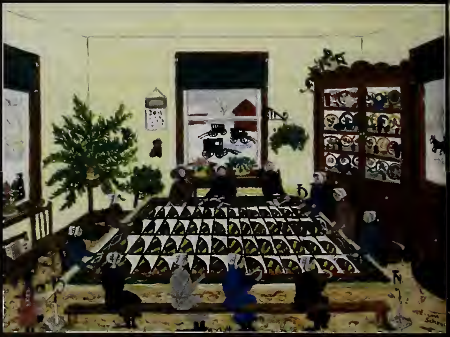
Miller was born April 1, 1916, in Garden City, Mo., to Joseph A. and Lydia (Schrock) Miller. He married Vesta A. Nafziger on Aug. 27, 1941, in Bombay, India. She died July 28, 1998.

S. Paul Miller

Miller was a mission worker in India from 1941 to 1983 for MBM, a predecessor agency to Mennonite Mission Network. Vesta arrived in India in 1938 and was serving as manager of the primary school in Balodgahan. Eventually the Millers were appointed to work at the Sankra Evangelical Station.

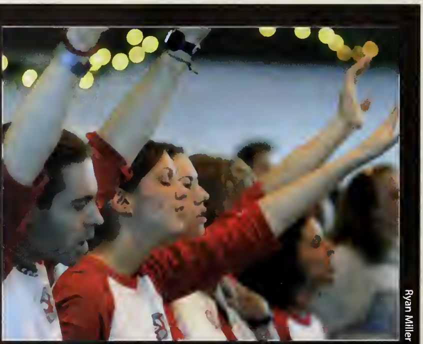
While in Sankra, the Millers organized relief work in the area. Many local people were unemployed and starving because of a famine. S. Paul wrote in 1944 that he and Vesta "tried to relieve in a measure some of the hardships and sufferings of the people here. It was decided that instead of giving out money or food, a work project should be opened to provide jobs for the needy."

Miller served in various roles, including pastor, teacher, farmer and administrator of leprosy clinics and building projects. During his retirement, he returned to India 14 times to direct building projects for Dhamtari Christian Hospital and Menno Clinic.



Amish and Mennonite folk art on display at Goshen

They never took an art class or had dreams of their work hanging in a gallery. But paintings made by self-taught folk painters from Amish and conservative Mennonite communities, including well-known folk painter Emma Schrock (see her work above), will be on exhibit in the Goshen College Library Gallery from Jan. 16 until May 13.—*Goshen College News Service*



Ryan Miller

RADical praise

From left, Sweden team leader Jonathan Linn of Berne, Ind., Rebecca Shumaker of Archbold, Ohio, Becky Shanahan of Watsontown, Pa., and staff member Ashley Evans sing praises to God during the RAD (Reaching and Discipling) Commissioning, Dec. 18, 2004, at Pine Hills Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Miller had lived in Goshen since 1983 and was a member of College Mennonite Church. Surviving are two daughters, Elaine (Joseph) Haines of Amherst, N.Y., and Eleanor (Larry) Miller of Strasbourg, France; one son, James A. (Nelda) Miller of Shipshewana; eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren; and two sisters, Katherine Schrock of Phoenix, and Mary Eleanor Kochsmeier of Bethlehem, Pa.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

AMBS receives grant to help congregations

ELKHART, Ind.—Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary has been selected to receive a grant from Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment Inc., to participate in a national initiative to build collaborations and connections between seminaries and congregations. The AMBS project, Engaging Pastors, will give pastors and seminary faculty opportunities to work together and share expertise face-to-face over the next five years.

Lilly Endowment offered these grants in order to encourage and expand collaborations that foster excellent clergy and thriving congregations. Of the 127 seminaries that applied, 21 schools received awards in this initiative.

AMBS will use the grant of $1.6 million over a five-year period for specific programs to achieve four main goals:

- to integrate pastors into the process of teaching and forming new pastors, which will influence how pastoral ministry is taught;

- to explore the connection between teaching in the congregation and in the seminary with the intent of strengthening both;
- to generate opportunities for ongoing feedback between pastors and the seminary;
- to grow AMBS partnership with other parts of the Mennonite Church around the common concern for fostering excellence in ministry.—*AMBS*

EMM receives $1.8 million from Edna Girvin

SALUNGA, Pa.—In March 2002, Eastern Mennonite Missions learned shortly after her death that 95-year-old Edna (Hershey) Girvin had bequeathed them $1.8 million from a charitable remainder annuity trust. It was the largest single estate gift the mission has received.

During the first part of her life, Edna Hershey worked as a seamstress at the former Paradise Sewing Factory. At age 52 she married widower Ross R. Girvin, with whom she lived until her death. She and Ross were members of Hershey (Pa.) Mennonite Church. He died just three weeks after Edna.—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

AIMM appoints new executive coordinator

GOSHEN, Ind.—Rodney Hollinger-Janzen has been appointed executive coordinator for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM) by its new International Central Council, effective in February.

Hollinger-Janzen grew up in Saskatchewan and served in Burkina Faso as an agricultural development worker with Mennonite Central Committee. He has a Masters of Divinity in Bible and cross-cultural studies from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and studied at the Center for the Study of New Religious Movements in Birmingham, England.

He served in Benin under Mennonite Board of Missions from 1987 to 2000 with African Independent Churches in community development and in Bible training, which led to the establishment of a locally-governed Bible institute. He works in the development department at Mennonite Mission Network.—*AIMM*

Courtesy photo

96 years and 500 recipes

The family of Clara Kauffman (center) celebrated her 96th birthday on Dec. 19, 2004, in Hesston, Kan. There her daughter Gloria Yoder and granddaughter Rhonda Rhodes unveiled a new cookbook, *Kauffman Family Favorites*, with more than 500 recipes, many of them Clara's favorites, along with examples of her wit. The book sells for $20 plus $5 for shipping. Part of the proceeds go to the Milo and Clara Scholarship Fund at Hesston College. Contact Kauffman Family Favorites, 516 Forest Lane, Arthur, IL 61911, or email kauffmancookbook@yahoo.com.

Another New York Times bestseller

INTERCOURSE, Pa.—Phyllis Pellman Good has hit *The New York Times* bestseller list again. Her new cookbook, *Fix-It and Forget-It Lightly*, arrived in the stores last August and a month later landed on the most prestigious bestseller list in the United States.

"The recipes still bear the traditional *Fix-It and Forget-It* characteristics—tasty food, quick and easy to prepare, and relatively few ingredients. In addition, these recipes are healthy and low-fat."

This third cookbook joins a brand that has sold more than 6 million copies. The first in the series, *Fix-It and Forget-It Cookbook*, was released in December 2000.—*Good Books*

Women's Concerns addressed pornography

Pornography is a multibillion-dollar business in the United States and a threat even to Christian families and marriages. Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Concerns has compiled a packet of articles and information called "Pornography, the Secret Sin: Keeping Ourselves Pure" to help families and congregations better recognize and understand this problem. The packet includes stories and reflections on pornography's impact on families, information on the dangers of pornography and sections on prevention and recovery. To order, call 888-563-4676 or email MCC U.S. Women's Concerns, lgp@mcc.org.—*MCC News Service*

Warning: Scam artist is using MDS name

Mennonite Disaster Service's binational office has received a complaint that someone has been trying to raise funds over the telephone and has been asking for credit card numbers. MDS says it will never call people to solicit funds and will not ask for credit card numbers over the phone unless people call to contribute. If anyone receives such a call, please report it to MDS right away at 717-859-2210 or mdsus@mds.mennonite.net.—*Mennonite Disaster Service*

IN BRIEF

Trollinger named vice president, dean at Bluffton

Bluffton University has named William V. Trollinger Jr. vice president and dean of academic affairs, effective July 1. He is a tenured associate professor of history at the University of Dayton and serves as director of the Core integrated studies program there. —*Bluffton University News Service*

Broken promises

Oxfam, the British relief and development group, says some 45 million children around the world will die over the next decade because rich countries like the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Japan have failed to meet their aid promises. According to "Paying the Price," a new report from Oxfam: "In 1970, the so-called G-8 countries—the major industrialized nations—pledged to make available 0.7 percent of their gross national income for aid. Thirty-four years on, none ... have reached this target, and many have not even set a timetable."—*National Catholic Reporter*

Women

by Paul Schrag

Only two Mennonite denominations—Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada—fully affirm women for all levels of pastoral ministry.

in the pulpit

Mennonite groups differ on what pastoral roles, if any, women can hold.

Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen didn't want to break the rules, and she didn't want to leave the Mennonite Brethren. But her desire to follow God's call led her to unexpected places.

"I didn't want to be a quitter," says Thiessen, pastor of West Abbotsford (B.C.) Mennonite Church. "I left with a lot of regret. I feel like I lost my family."

Her new family is Mennonite Church Canada, which allows women to serve as senior pastors. The family she left, the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren (MB) Churches, does not.

But there was an exception: Thiessen herself. For most of the time she served River East MB Church in Winnipeg, from 1990 to 2000, she was the lead pastor.

The conference's Board of Faith and Life eventually decided to "grandmother me in," Thiessen says, rather than disrupt a good pastor-church relationship.

But the MB restriction on women pastors remained. So when Thiessen and her family moved to Abbotsford, they switched to MC Canada.

"My concern is that women with leadership abilities are leaving the [MB] denomination," she says. "I'm just trying to use my gifts as God has called me."

Thiessen's experience shows that, 30 years after the first ordination of a North American Mennonite woman, the issue of women in pastoral ministry remains a point of difference between Mennonite groups—and a topic of debate within some of them.

Only two Mennonite denominations—Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada—fully affirm women for all levels of pastoral ministry.

The Brethren in Christ, an Anabaptist group that participates in Mennonite World Conference and Mennonite Central Committee, also allows women in all pastoral roles.

Sometimes there's a difference between stating an openness to women in ministry and actually hiring a female pastor. —Sven Eriksson

In other Mennonite bodies, policies range from reserving all pastoral roles for men only—a position held by a variety of conservative groups—to allowing women to serve in all positions except senior pastor.

The latter position is held by the Mennonite Brethren conferences in the United States and Canada.

But that policy is being questioned by some MBs in Canada who are advocating full acceptance of women in leadership. As a result, the Canadian MB Conference is engaged in a discussion of how women can serve.

The issue was sparked by a 2003 Manitoba provincial conference resolution that

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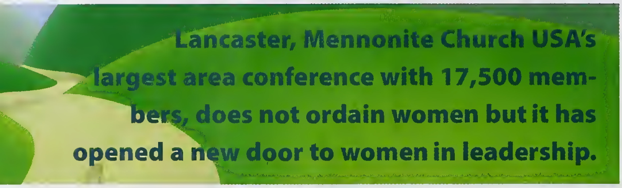
called for ending the ban on women senior pastors. The request went to the national Board of Faith and Life. The resolution essentially called for revisiting an issue last dealt with in 1993. At that time, U.S. and Canadian delegates rejected a recommendation to open the senior pastorate to women.

The request from Manitoba, like the 1993 recommendation, does not call for women's ordination. It simply allows congregations the freedom to make their own decisions about women as senior pastors.

The Board of Faith and Life has responded to the request by scheduling six "learning and listening" meetings in different provinces.

The meetings are exercises in "interpreting the Bible in community," says Walter Unger of Abbotsford, B.C., chair of the Board of Faith and Life. Steps beyond the series of meetings have not been determined. "There's a whole new generation of women and men who have arisen since 1993, and we owe it to them to revisit this issue," Unger says.

Of the 477 pastors in Canadian MB churches, 55, or 12 percent, are women. In contrast to Canada, the issue of women in leadership seems dormant in the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, says Lynn Jost, a member of the conference Leadership Board.



Lancaster, Mennonite Church USA's largest area conference with 17,500 members, does not ordain women but it has opened a new door to women in leadership.

"It's not an issue we're talking about much," Jost says. "There's a comfort level with the status quo."

In U.S. MB congregations, women account for about 7 percent, or 23 out of 327, of people in pastoral ministry positions.

If the Canadian MB conference lifted its restriction on female senior pastors, the U.S. conference probably would need to reopen the issue, Jost says.

The MB confession of faith does not dictate what the policy on female senior pastors must be. Therefore, it would be possible for the U.S. and Canadian conferences to have different positions.

Jost sees a trend that he thinks might point in the direction of change. "In the college setting, the issue seems less important," says Jost, who teaches Bible at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan. "People are saying that gender isn't an important qualification for leadership anywhere. Therefore it seems that in the next generation, even people who hold a conservative position might not emphasize those [biblical] texts that seem to limit women."

Acceptance of women in pastoral ministry is the greatest in Mennonite Church Canada. Of 305 people serving in pastoral ministry, 83, or 27 percent, are women.

Sven Eriksson, denominational minister for Mennonite Church Canada, says he saw an increasing acceptance of women in pastoral roles. But sometimes there's a difference, he says, between stating an openness to women in ministry and actually hiring a female pastor.

Some congregations, Eriksson says, "would give lip service to [equality], but when push came to shove, they would screen out women and accept men, for lead pastors in particular."

In Mennonite Church Canada's sister denomination, Mennonite Church USA, 16 percent of people in pastoral ministry are women—384 out of 2,283.

That's an increase from 10 to 15 years ago, when the percentage of women pastors was about 10 percent, says Diane Zaerr Brenneman, denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA Congregational and Ministerial Leadership.

Brenneman is disappointed that the numbers aren't higher. "Women still aren't being encouraged and called like men are," she says. But women who feel a call are persistent, Brenneman says.

"I am amazed and awed by women who have been excluded by not having their gifts recognized, and they haven't left, and they continue to offer their gifts," she says. "I think that shows a tremendous strength of character."

Acceptance of women in pastoral ministry varies in Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences. Western District has the highest percentage, 27 percent, followed by Central District, 24 percent, and Eastern District, 24 percent.

At the other end of the scale are Franklin and North Central conferences, with no women in pastoral ministry.

Lancaster, Mennonite Church USA's largest area conference with 17,500 members, does not ordain women but it has opened a new door to women in leadership. Five years ago, the conference's Leadership Assembly approved allowing women to be credentialed for pastoral ministry. Previously, credentialing was granted only for positions such as deaconess and chaplain.

Currently two congregations have female lead pastors—the first ever in Lancaster. To serve in this role, they needed special approval from the conference's Bishop Board.

Also five years ago, Lancaster placed a five-year moratorium on Bishop Board discussion of women in ministry. Now that the moratorium has expired, "we are anxious to begin the discussion again," says Carol Oberholtzer, chair of the conference's Women in Leadership Committee.

Besides Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, another Anabaptist denomination that allows women to serve at all levels is the Brethren in Christ (BIC). The church has officially affirmed women to pursue positions of ministry since 1982. But movement has been slow. Today women account for 7 percent of BIC people who are licensed or ordained. Only one or two women are senior pastors, says Janet Peifer, an advocate for BIC women in leadership.

Peifer, an associate pastor at Messiah Village BIC Church in Mechanicsburg, Pa., directs the denomination's Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership.

"We have full support from leaders and bishops" for women in pastoral ministry, Peifer says. But that doesn't necessarily translate into congregations opening their doors to female pastors.

"The biggest drawback in the BIC is that when there are open positions for pastors, we do not have enough of our own males available, and instead of looking for women, we get men from other traditions who are opposed to women in ministry," Peifer says. Yet she says she feels hopeful more women are responding to the ministry call. This year 44 women are taking courses required for BIC members who want to be licensed for ministry. Probably not all those will seek licensing, but the high number is a hopeful sign, she says.

Several smaller, more conservative groups limit the pastorate to men. In the Evangelical Mennonite Conference (EMC), a Canadian group with about 7,100 members in 52 churches, the constitution says only men can be ordained.

That hasn't stopped a few congregations from hiring female pastors. Others in the conference don't seem to object to this, even if they wouldn't hire a woman themselves, says David Thiessen, conference pastor at the EMC office in Steinbach, Man.

"Officially we take a conservative stance, but in practice women have been well received as leaders in churches where they are called and informally recognized in the conference," he says. "Things are slowly changing, without causing ripples or division. We work hard at remaining united in spite of these differences."

Three or four EMC congregations have a woman on the pastoral staff. None currently has a female lead pastor.

EMC formally dealt with the question of women in leadership five years ago. The Conference Council discussed three papers that presented different views. Then they placed a five-year moratorium on discussion. The moratorium expired this year, but the issue hasn't been reopened.

"Personally, I'm very open to women in leadership and hope that will continue to develop," Thiessen says. "I don't know what direction we will go, ultimately."

The Conservative Mennonite Conference, with about 11,000 members in 113 churches, has no women in pastoral ministry. Its constitution states that ordination and licensure are limited to men.

Moderator Ben W. Shirk of Goshen, Ind., says that as far as he knows, the conference has never considered changing that policy. He says the policy is based on Scriptures that say women should not have authority over men. The conference statement of theology says men and women are "equal before God as persons and distinct in manhood and womanhood, with male responsibility for headship in the home and in the church."

The Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference—with 5,800 members in 54 congregations in Canada, Mexico, Belize and Bolivia—has no ordained female pastors.

It does, however, have women who serve congregations in leadership roles as worship directors or counselors and who are referred to as pastors. In 2002, for the first time, a women was elected to the General Council, the top leadership body.

We see that God gives leadership gifts to women, so we need to take our experience to the Bible and continue to study the biblical texts together.—Diane Zaerr Brenneman

The Chortitzer Mennonite Conference, a Canadian group with 13 congregations and about 1,900 people who attend, has no female pastors.

But women's teaching role has grown, says Dick Wiebe, conference bishop in Steinbach, Man. "It has been understood in the past that women do not teach men," he says. Now, with the pastor's approval, women are allowed to teach adult Sunday school classes that include men.

Conferences that address the issue of women in leadership should be commended for their efforts of dialogue and discernment, says Brenneman, Mennonite Church USA denominational minister.

"I understand and grew up myself with the teaching that women should not lead, so I know it's a long journey," she says. "We see that God gives leadership gifts to women, so we need to take our experience to the Bible and continue to study the biblical texts together."

Paul Schrag wrote this article for Meetinghouse, a group of Mennonite and Brethen in Christ editors in Canada and the United States.

A fear of feeling

the nonsensual Mennonite

by Martha Ann Burgard

While growing up in the Mennonite church, I was bombarded with the evils of sensuality. That word was always equated with sex. A man always had to be careful not to even look at a woman for fear he might feel lust. We women had to be careful not to arouse any feelings in men. Apparently women weren't deemed capable of feeling lust, just inspiring it.

We came to avoid all sensory experiences for fear that we would sin. We became numb. Thus the likelihood of getting a hug from a Mennonite is about as good as getting struck by lightning.

Taste, smell, touch, hearing and sight are our five senses. While sex may employ any or all of these, they are certainly not limited to sex.

The church to which I currently belong has "sharing time," when people can share their concerns, and prayer is offered. I learned the hard way that there is a "right" and a "wrong" way to share one's concerns to a Mennonite audience.

I had joined this church in the first place because I was told they were especially loving, caring, compassionate people. I soon came to learn they wouldn't help me much.

One Saturday I had a fender bender that upset me. I shared this incident with my Sunday school class the next morning and said it would have helped me if I could have called someone to talk about it.

I received an email from the leader of our congregation that said my sharing was inappropriate. It was OK to share that I had a fender bender. It was not OK to share that it upset me. She went on to say that if I had called her, she would have told me what she tells her daughter when she calls, "Don't call me. Call your psychiatrist, call your caseworker, call your therapist, call anybody, but don't call me because I can't do anything to help you."

I was appalled but not all that surprised at her reaction. I had joined this church in the first place because I was told they were especially loving, caring, compassionate people. I soon came to learn they wouldn't help me much.

As one member told me, "I have compassion for you even though I may not show it. It is just safer to have compassion for people you don't know. There is too much risk involved in having compassion for someone you know." She went on to say that she dealt with the unpleasant things in her life by trying not to think about them and avoiding anything that reminded her of them.

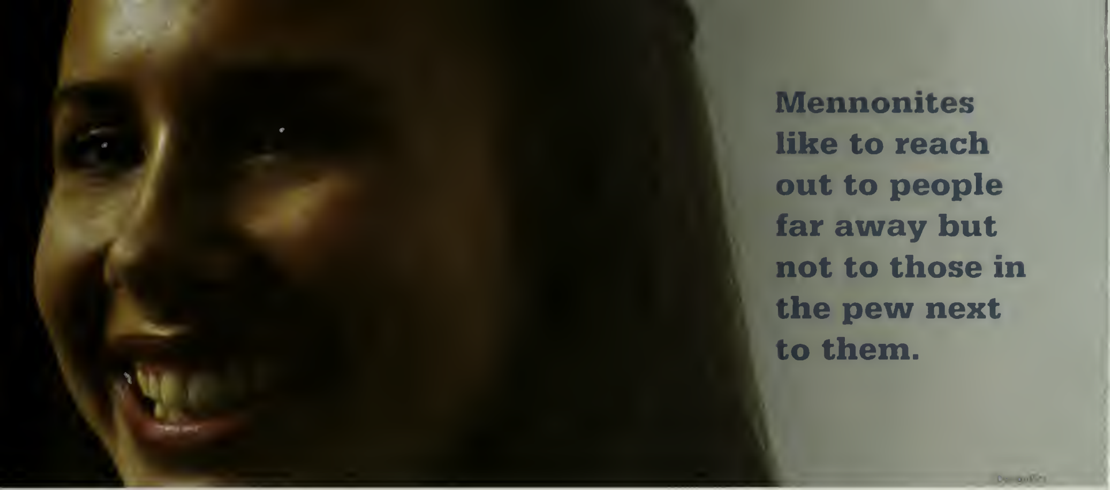
What good is it to have compassion for someone if the person in need of it doesn't know it? That is like putting a piece of bread in the toaster and not plugging it in the socket.

Compassion is a sensual experience. One must be able to feel empathy, to feel the other's pain, in order to feel compassion. How can someone feel another's pain when he denies his own?

Several years ago I went to my class reunion at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. Each person gave a synopsis of his or her life since college. To hear them tell it, their lives had been absolutely wonderful.

I was the last person to speak. I was going through another tribulation at that time and felt led to share the ugly of my life rather than the beauty. It was only then that another classmate spoke up and shared that her life hadn't been as rosy as she had said. Afterward, another classmate came up to me and said, "I'm so glad you shared what you did. It was so un-Mennonite."

Mennonites like to do their good deeds "en masse" and far from home. We can travel to another state to rebuild houses after a tornado for com-



Mennonites like to reach out to people far away but not to those in the pew next to them.

plete strangers but cannot acknowledge the person sitting next to us in church with tears running down her face.

If compassion is not available from one's church, then where does one go to find it? My church claims I need to go to a support group. If my spiritual needs are to be deflected to a secular group, what is the purpose of the church?

Suffering is not purely a physical or psychological problem that can be addressed by doctors and support groups. Suffering generates spiritual wounds as well. Undue suffering causes one to ask, "If God loves me, then why do I suffer so much while others remain unscathed by tribulation?" That is a question that I need answered by my church, not my psychiatrist.

I wonder how many other Mennonites suffer in silence for fear of rebuke for admitting human passion as part of their makeup.

Jesus' life was about compassion for suffering humanity. He touched people and healed them. He gave up his carpentry job to focus on rebuilding broken spirits. His death on the cross was the ultimate Passion.

Webster's Dictionary lists several definitions of passion: 1. The sufferings of Christ between the night of the Last Supper and his death. 2. Suffering. 3. Emotion. 4. Love.

The same word is used to denote suffering and love. If I asked 100 people what the first word was that popped in their heads when I said the word "passion," the answer likely would be "sex."

It is a shame that passion has been deprived of its rightful place in an exuberant life due to its mere acquaintance with sex. This distaste for passion is one reason the Mennonite church is lacking in joy and celebration, emotions I discovered only after attending the Episcopal church.

The Mennonite church is full of intelligent, talented, capable people who do a lot of good in the world at large. However, the Mennonite church has been unable to address my suffering as one of its own. I wonder how many other Mennonites suffer in silence for fear of rebuke for admitting human passion as part of their makeup.

I am amazed at how Mennonites can go to prisons and embrace people who raped and murdered innocent people and proclaim love for these perpetrators of the worst pain imaginable, yet these same Mennonites rebuke me for expressing the pain I have suffered at the hands of such people.

The Mennonite church I grew up in caused me enormous spiritual agony, which was exacerbated by the abuse of my family. I left the church for many years. I came back to the Mennonite church believing that the church I grew up in was an aberration of the true Mennonite church and not indicative of Mennonites in general. I hoped the real Mennonites could help me find the healing I needed. Unfortunately, though the clothes have changed, underneath, things aren't much different.

I have quit attending my church because it depresses me to sit there and listen to people claim they have everything I need but it is only available to people "out there" and not to me. I feel like a starving person sitting in the middle of a bunch of people throwing good food to the hogs.

The theme of Atlanta 2003 was, "Come to the Table." As a Mennonite, born and raised in the church, I have always had to settle for the crumbs that fell from the table. When do I get to sit at the table and dine like a worthy member of the family of Christ?

Martha Ann Burgard lives in Massanutten, Va.

An ode to walking

Four reasons why walking may be a godly way to go

by Layton Friesen

> *I number it among my blessings that my father had no car. … The deadly power of rushing about wherever I pleased had not been given me. I measured distances by the standard of man, man walking on his own two feet, not by the standard of the internal combustion engine. … The truest and most horrible claim made for modern transport is that it "annihilates space." It does. It annihilates one of the most glorious gifts we have been given. … Of course if man hates space and wants it annihilated that is another matter. Why not creep into his coffin at once? There is little enough space there.*
> —C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*

What follows is the kind of congratulation-to-self that occasionally sits in my mind when I find myself walking while others drive. Nevertheless, it might serve as a kind of proposal for enshrining walking as a Christian form of transportation.

It may strike you as odd that such a primal and common means of transport should need a defense. In the city where I live it is only the young and the poor who still use walking as a means of transport. Many of the others will occasionally "go for a walk," but for the most part, we think and live by the terms of the automobile.

I have set out to tangle with a tyrant; the automobile has such a grip on our minds that only drastic measures can put it on the defensive.

If the tone here seems exaggerated and overstated it is because I have set out to tangle with a tyrant; the automobile has such a grip on our minds that only drastic measures can put it on the defensive. But all that aside, here are four reasons why walking may be a godly way to go.

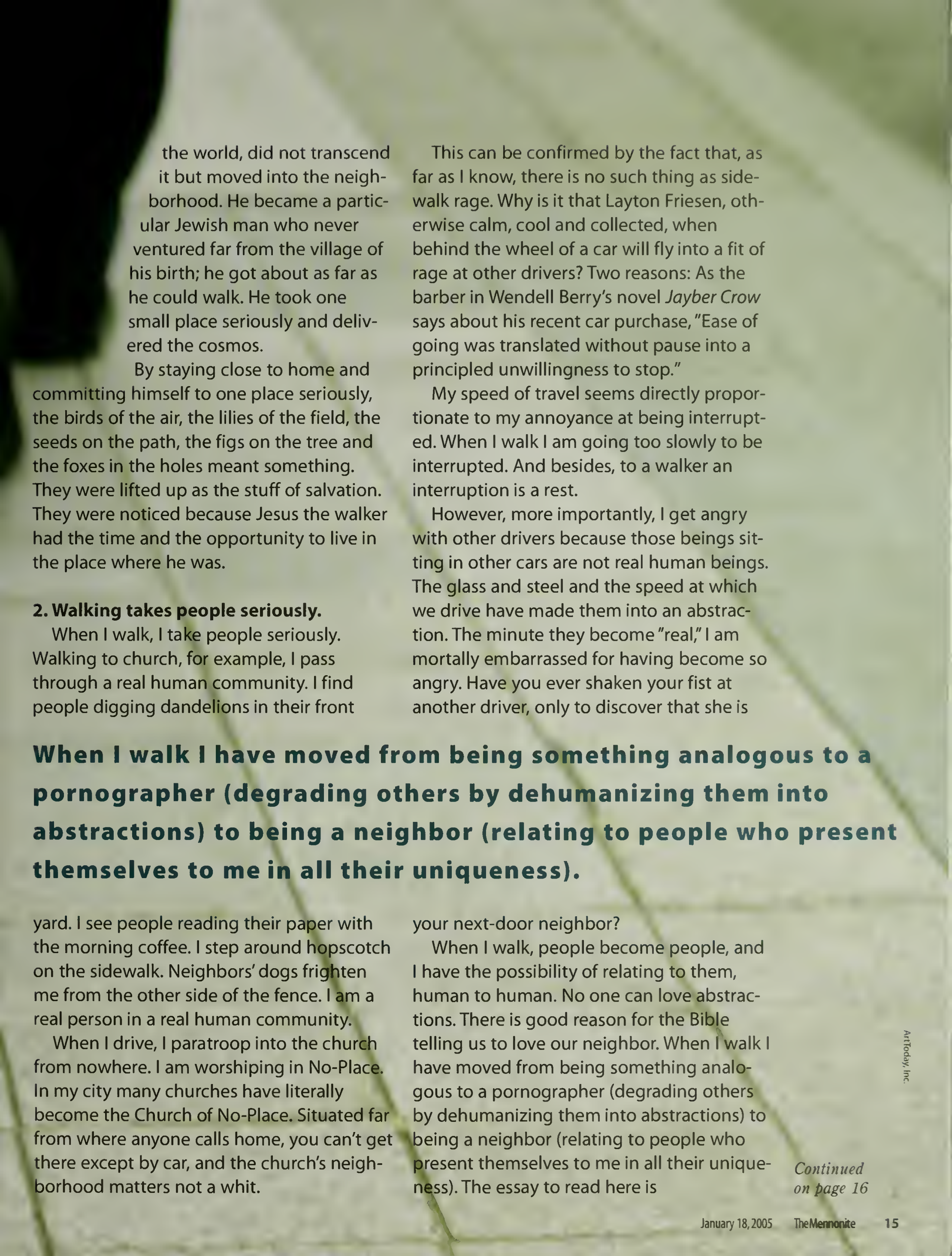
1. Walking takes the world on its terms.

When I walk, I take the world on its own terms. A rule of stewardship says that what is stewarded needs to be taken with a measure of seriousness and attention. When I walk, the puddle, the steep hill, the sub-zero temperature, the mosquitoes, the lilac bush, mean something to me. They have become a part of my world. In other words, my neighborhood has become a place, not just a space to move through.

Driving, on the other hand, flattens the world into nonexistence. The steep hill is as flat as the plain. The puddle causes me not a moment's thought. The lilacs I see from afar, insulated from their aroma. This elimination of the world is obvious when the weather plunges below –25 C.

It is not the walkers who complain of the cold but the drivers. When I walk, the cold becomes something to be defied; I dress and exert myself to elude its grip. The icy world around me has become a formidable other to be taken seriously. Hence the satisfaction of coming in from a cold walk. When I drive, the best I can do is sit helplessly shivering and curse, hoping my car warms up before I arrive at my destination.

This, it seems to me, is where stewardship and incarnation meet. God, in order to save



ArtToday, Inc.

the world, did not transcend it but moved into the neighborhood. He became a particular Jewish man who never ventured far from the village of his birth; he got about as far as he could walk. He took one small place seriously and delivered the cosmos.

By staying close to home and committing himself to one place seriously, the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the seeds on the path, the figs on the tree and the foxes in the holes meant something. They were lifted up as the stuff of salvation. They were noticed because Jesus the walker had the time and the opportunity to live in the place where he was.

2. Walking takes people seriously.

When I walk, I take people seriously. Walking to church, for example, I pass through a real human community. I find people digging dandelions in their front yard. I see people reading their paper with the morning coffee. I step around hopscotch on the sidewalk. Neighbors' dogs frighten me from the other side of the fence. I am a real person in a real human community.

When I walk I have moved from being something analogous to a pornographer (degrading others by dehumanizing them into abstractions) to being a neighbor (relating to people who present themselves to me in all their uniqueness).

When I drive, I paratroop into the church from nowhere. I am worshiping in No-Place. In my city many churches have literally become the Church of No-Place. Situated far from where anyone calls home, you can't get there except by car, and the church's neighborhood matters not a whit.

This can be confirmed by the fact that, as far as I know, there is no such thing as sidewalk rage. Why is it that Layton Friesen, otherwise calm, cool and collected, when behind the wheel of a car will fly into a fit of rage at other drivers? Two reasons: As the barber in Wendell Berry's novel *Jayber Crow* says about his recent car purchase, "Ease of going was translated without pause into a principled unwillingness to stop."

My speed of travel seems directly proportionate to my annoyance at being interrupted. When I walk I am going too slowly to be interrupted. And besides, to a walker an interruption is a rest.

However, more importantly, I get angry with other drivers because those beings sitting in other cars are not real human beings. The glass and steel and the speed at which we drive have made them into an abstraction. The minute they become "real," I am mortally embarrassed for having become so angry. Have you ever shaken your fist at another driver, only to discover that she is your next-door neighbor?

When I walk, people become people, and I have the possibility of relating to them, human to human. No one can love abstractions. There is good reason for the Bible telling us to love our neighbor. When I walk I have moved from being something analogous to a pornographer (degrading others by dehumanizing them into abstractions) to being a neighbor (relating to people who present themselves to me in all their uniqueness). The essay to read here is

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G.K.Chesterton's "On Certain Modern Writers and the Institution of the Family."

3. Walking contributes to my life.

When I walk, my body makes a necessary contribution to my life. In this age of cars and planes, my body can quickly become a useless appendage to my mind. Much communications technology has little to recommend it other than making the real presence of my body superfluous to my life—cell phones, Internet. Automation has repeatedly bullied my body away from places where its skill was valued. My body seems to provide me with no essential service and so must be put on life-support called exercise.

My world becomes a small, human-sized world, and as such it is a world that can be reasonably appreciated, loved and tended by a human being.

My body becomes a means to nothing and so becomes an end, which is to say it becomes an idol. An idol is usually a good thing that has lost its place in life, and through that loss has taken on hideous proportions. The world I live in tempts me to idolize bodies, even while it seeks to eliminate every conceivable use for my body.

However, when I walk, I have no such idol. As a walker, my body has become a means to an end. It is getting me someplace. Its care is important because it has a job to do toward something I value. As something important, my body has again become a part of who I am, I have become more whole, which is another way of saying, more Christian.

4. Walking moves me at a human speed.

When I walk, I move at the speed of a human being; when I drive, I move at the speed of the gods. We often laugh at the poor folks at the turn of the century who thought a person would die when 35 mph was exceeded. I wonder whether jet lag and the suffocating stress of my modern life may be their last laugh. Might I feel hurried, harried and hustled because I am being yanked about at demonic speeds?

Might there actually be speeds that are too fast for my health? Might the reckless speed of my travel be another manifestation of that grasping, agitated craving for divine power that alienated the Original Pair and that frustrated the Babel-raisers? Might my obsession with stretching myself over the world like a god wreak havoc on creation as well as my soul?

Walking seems gentle on my soul. As a walker I can entertain no illusions of grandeur. I cannot be pretentious about the limits of my world. There are certain places I simply can't get to on foot. This kind of limitation breeds contentment.

My world becomes a small, human-sized world, and as such it is a world that can be reasonably appreciated, loved and tended by a human being. As a small human-sized world it is a world for which I can take a reasonable amount of responsibility. That just seems a lot more Christian to me. TM

Layton Friesen is senior pastor at Fort Garry Evangelical Mennonite Church and was previously associate pastor at Crestview Fellowship, both in Winnipeg.

Squirrel hanging

by Jean Janzen

The dead body is draped over
the electric wire which killed him.

It hangs in clear view where I walk
below its slow decay. A decade,

it seems, of resistance
to this valley's fire and fog.

After the crumble of skin,
the small triangle of skull,

symmetry of ribs, limp legs swinging
in the wind, and finally

only the spine still clinging.
And I am reminded of the martyr cages

in Münster still hanging
on the church tower, where birds

once exposed the delicate metatarsals
of feet wildly dancing for New Jerusalem.

Empty cages, the bars like skeletons
which resist the loss of memory

that once someone dared to walk
the wire out in the open, the sun

blinding his eyes so that he failed
to see the broken place,

where he stepped, and where he died,
exposed and forgiven.

Jean Janzen lives in Fresno, Calif.

Back to school

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA is a new learning environment. The Holy Spirit is leading us back to school to increase our effectiveness for our spiritual vocation as Anabaptist Christians. Will we respond to this invitation by citing our past training, combined with our years of experience? Or will we accept that something has changed, that we need to knuckle under, accept the invitation and set about learning new things? I believe God's call to all of us in Mennonite Church USA requires us to go back to school.

We thought we knew who we were—we knew our name, where we came from and how to act. But our new church environment has given us a new name—Mennonite Church USA—with a new environment of relationships and a new place to stand. We discover that old stereotypes of each other are challenged and experienced differently when we are in the same house. Reluctantly we admit that we have something new to learn about others we thought we knew already.

Fresh applications: We used to speak of the teachings of the church as though these were self-evident and already known completely, codified in official statements and now become measuring sticks of faithfulness. Now we wonder if we should still learn something from these teachings—some fresh applications, some added meaning or depth of truth we had not seen before, that help us understand God's purpose anew.

We thought we knew church language. Then someone introduced terms such as "antiracism" and "missional." We surprised ourselves at how resistant we can be to learning new vocabulary. As we contemplate our reasons for this resistance, we finally confess that we resist because new language points us to new lessons to learn in the application of the gospel to relationships between the races or for the way the new language forces us to reconsider what it means to be in mission.

We thought we knew how to learn, as we gathered in rows at churchwide assemblies and listened, individually, to our "agents" of mission, stewardship, education and the like, who told us "how it is." In our new church, at churchwide assemblies, we hope to learn more completely by talking to each other at tables. We engage each other personally as teachers and learners, believing that God has given each of us something to teach and something to learn from others, whatever our origins or pedigree.

A two-way street: It used to be that church leaders in churchwide boards, agencies, conferences and schools taught congregations how to be the church. Now we discover that increasingly some pastors and congregations are becoming the teachers of the other parts of the church. Some congregations are adapting to the needs of their communities and learning new ways of presenting and living the gospel far more rapidly and effectively than their former "teachers." Learning in Mennonite Church USA has become a two-way street.

Mennonite Church USA has become a stimulating, some might say topsy-turvy environment of learning.

Mennonite Church USA has become a stimulating, some might say topsy-turvy environment of learning. The Holy Spirit is at work in this fertile learning environment, where growth of new understanding and application of the gospel's values and teachings, both old and new, will help us listen to the whispers of the Holy Spirit.

But to learn something new we must trade our at-home feelings about the church for the more challenging at-school feelings. Our personal expectations of the church need to change if we are to utilize all aspects of the church as an environment for spiritual learning. We are challenged to alter our preconceived notions about who has something to teach us and who is supposed to learn from us. We discover that the curriculum, always based in Scripture, always draws from the "now testament" as it continues to depend upon the Old and New Testaments. In fervent prayer, we learn to take the Holy Spirit the most seriously, others more seriously, and ourselves less seriously. We gain new appreciation for every learning situation and for every new teacher. With all this we learn never to underestimate our individual moorings of faith, given by God so that each of us has a piece of the Good News to share with others. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mennonite education: an invitation to enter the story**—Gloria Y. Diener
- **Faith development in academics, for vocation**—Anna Groff

Waltner nominated as moderator-elect

Would serve as moderator for Mennonite Church USA in 2007-2009 biennium

Everett J. Thomas

Sharon Waltner leads Mennonite Church USA Executive Board members through a draft of the Healthcare Access Resolution during the board's October 2004 meeting. Other members (left to right) are Edwin Rempel, J. Daryl Byler and James Harder.

Oswald

Williams

Becoming moderator-elect for Mennonite Church USA won't be exactly like farming South Dakota soil. But Sharon Graber Waltner's rural roots—coupled with the bountiful fruit of leadership experience—could bring new depth to the post if delegates elect her at Charlotte 2005 in July.

Because of her combination of gifts, experience and perspective, the denomination's leadership discernment committee nominated Waltner as their choice to serve alongside Roy Williams of Land O'Lakes, Fla. Williams, pastor of College Hill Mennonite Church in Tampa, Fla., and former moderator for Southeast Mennonite Conference, will succeed Duane Oswald of Fresno, Calif., as moderator after Charlotte 2005.

"For this next biennium," says Ruth Suter of Brisbane, Calif., who chairs the committee, "our discernment process led us to the Great Plains and to Sharon Waltner—with her unique gifts, skills, perspective and experiences in listening, discerning and consensus-building at several different organizational levels within Mennonite Church USA."

A moderator-elect serves for two years and chairs the Constituency Leaders Council, after which the moderator-elect becomes moderator for two years and chairs the Executive Board.

Waltner's callings include running a farm with her husband, Keith, and consulting for Lewis and Clark Health Education Systems. They also include helping people listen to each other and God and to trust each other to build a new church.

During the transformation of the former Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church into Mennonite Church USA, Waltner served as moderator of the former Northern District and co-moderator of Central Plains Mennonite Conference. In 2000, those conferences merged to become Central Plains.

"I learned [it is important] to trust each other as people in the Mennonite church who are all committed to the furthering of God's kingdom," says Waltner, a member of Salem Mennonite Church in Freeman. "Transformation is hard work. ... When people meet face-to-face, we break down false perceptions, dispel myths and learn to celebrate the many things we share in common."

Waltner serves as a member of Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board and is on its executive committee. She received an undergraduate degree in nursing from Goshen (Ind.) College and a master's degree in counseling from the University of South Dakota.

Waltner's forebears were part of the German-speaking immigration from Russia that settled in the Dakota prairies in the 1870s. A fourth-generation descendent of this migration, she grew up on a family farm near Freeman.

Salem-Zion Mennonite Church and Freeman Academy were influential components of her spiritual pilgrimage, she says.

A lifetime spent within the Anabaptist family that believes in community discernment has shaped her views on leadership as well as dreams for the denomination's future, she says.

"The synergy that takes place among individuals, conferences and congregations working together is energizing," she says. "This synergy inspires hope, energy and optimism for the future of Mennonite Church USA."

In the same vein, she dreams that all Mennonite Church USA constituents will experience increased ownership in the denomination.

"We live in a broken world, and together we have a wonderful opportunity to share the denomination's faith and mission in these difficult times, as we align our priorities with God's purposes."
—Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service

Together we have a wonderful opportunity to share the denomination's faith and mission.
—Sharon Waltner

Mennonite Church USA moderators

Moderator	Term	Hometown
Lee Snyder	1999-2001	Bluffton, Ohio
Ervin Stutzman	2001-2003	Harrisonburg, Va.
D. Duane Oswald	2003-2005	Fresno, Calif.
Roy Williams	2005-2007	Land O' Lakes, Fla.

Indonesian Mennonite conferences set two-part plan in response to tsunami

Many local government officers are dead or missing, and much of the medical staff is either dead, hospitalized with injuries or searching for family members. —Eddy Sutjipto

With the magnitude of the tragic Dec. 26, 2004, earthquake and subsequent deadly tsunami still unfolding, three Mennonite conferences in Indonesia were rallying support for victims in their country.

Within days of the initial strike, the GKMI conference, based in Semarang, launched a two-stage plan to distribute aid: Immediate funds received will be used to buy drinking water, medication, food, baby food, sanitation equipment, tents, sleeping bags, masks and body bags. Goods will be distributed through agencies that are already operating in areas of need until the conference can set up its own operations.

In the second stage, GKMI will dispatch a work team to help relief and recovery efforts in areas not reached by government and nongovernment organizations' aid.

The GKMI and the other two Mennonite conferences in Indonesia, GITJ and JKI, are working alongside Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Eastern Mennonite Missions.

The GKMI conference has 11 churches in North Sumatra, three in the capital city and the rest scattered throughout North Sumatra. Most of the churches are on higher ground far from the coastal area. They felt the earthquake but were spared the devastation experienced in coastal regions.

Relief workers who can drive trucks, operate heavy equipment, cook and provide medical care are desperately needed in areas affected by the tsunami, says Eddy Sutjipto, former moderator of the GKMI conference and a Mennonite World Conference executive committee member. Thousands of troops and relief workers toiled there for the first three days with little food or drink and no sleep, he says.

Many local government officers are dead or missing, and much of the medical staff is either dead, hospitalized with injuries or searching for family members, says Sutjipto. Without them, the devastated area is virtually paralyzed. The central government is assuming some control.

Much of the communication infrastructure was heavily damaged, making it difficult to get or send out accurate information. Pak Abang Rahino, MCC officer in Indonesia, visited North Sumatra on Dec. 31, 2004, to assess needs and identify how to respond most effectively.

The GKMI encouraged its churches to take special offerings for Aceh and North Sumatra at New Year's Eve and Jan. 2 worship services and on World Fellowship Sunday, Jan. 23. The conference also has opened a special bank account where Indonesian Mennonites can direct their donations.

MWC has sent a letter to the Indonesian churches expressing condolence and prayers "that they may feel God's presence holding them through the support of others in the days, weeks and years of recovery that lie ahead.

"We commit ourselves to help get out the word … so that we, your community in other parts of the world, may be generous in supporting your efforts," said MWC president Nancy Heisey in the letter.

MWC has also learned that Mennonites and

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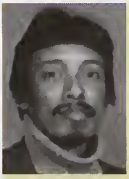
Worker describes devastation



Rahino

"There are dead bodies everywhere," MCC Indonesia staff member Pak Abang Rahino said in a phone call from Banda Aceh to fellow staffers Jeanne and Dan Jantzi on Jan. 4. "On the streets, on trees, in broken buildings, in the water, in the river, sticking out of the rubble. It's very terrible.

"I saw 60 or more bodies being hauled away in a truck. There are about two meters of rubble under my feet. It took me a long time to walk the two kilometers to get here because I had to be careful not to step on nails or glass or bodies.

"I am sure there are thousands of bodies under my feet buried in the rubble. The smell is horrible … this is unforgettable."

Rahino reported that survivors were being evacuated from the worst affected areas, leaving the dead and the rubble behind.

Rahino is in Banda Aceh conducting an assessment of the context, needs and potential partners for tsunami relief.—*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

Mennonite Central Committee begins $1.4 million response to devastation; staff coordinates with other agencies in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka.

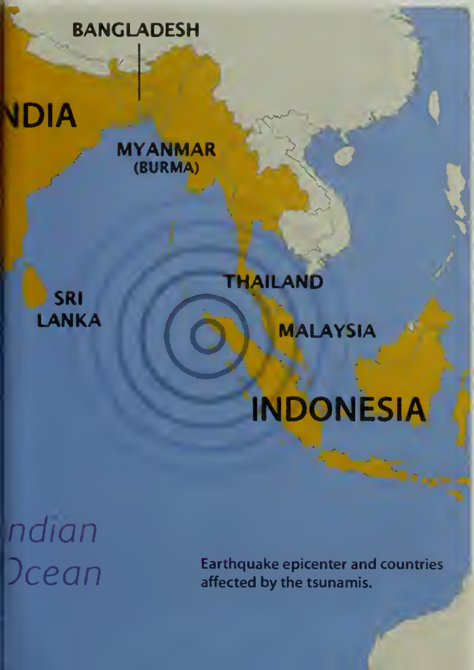
Brethren in Christ in India escaped the devastation that battered the fringe of the Indian Ocean. Their churches are on higher ground, far from the coastal region.—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference News Service*

MCC response to tsunami

Mennonite Central Committee has begun a $1.4 million immediate and long-term response to devastation left behind by the Southern Asia earthquake and tsunami that killed more than 100,000 people in eight countries, one-third of them children. Hundreds of thousands more have been injured and millions left homeless.

MCC's response includes some $10,000 for medical and water purification equipment and supplies to be airlifted through Church World Service; three containers of canned meat worth $150,000; 2,000 metric tons of grain through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank worth some $700,000; and some $550,000.

Additional funds for local purchase of food, water, clothing, fuel and health items—as well as for employment and reconstruction—have been requested by partner agencies in India and Sri Lanka.



Earthquake epicenter and countries affected by the tsunamis.

MCC sent an assessment team to India and Sri Lanka on Jan. 5 to join their local and national staff to review the situation.

"Part of the reason this event is so devastating is that people in the areas affected have lost absolutely everything and are now needing to rebuild from scratch," says Ronald J.R. Mathies, executive director of MCC.

The goal of this effort is to allow people to begin restoring their dignity and livelihoods.
—Willie Reimer

To meet the immediate and long-term needs in India, MCC will work with the India Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA) to develop a food for community development program that allows people to clean up their own communities, rebuild homes, replant fields and prevent internal migration of people to other areas of the country.

In southern India, MCC has contributed $22,000 for rice, blankets, clothing and other items for 1,400 families—approximately 6,000 people—in five villages along the coast of the state of Tamil Nadu. Another $25,000 will go to CASA, an MCC partner, for emergency food needs.

"The goal of this effort is to allow people to begin restoring their dignity and livelihoods," says Willie Reimer, MCC Director of Food, Disaster and Material Resources.

In Sri Lanka, MCC staff are working with local partner Y-GRO, a Sri Lankan church-based development agency, by assisting local churches packaging relief supplies and accompanying a medical team to areas damaged by the tsunami. Y-GRO is a member of a consortium of humanitarian organizations in Sri Lanka.

MCC has 10 North American workers, along with five children, in Indonesia. There are two workers and two children in Sri Lanka, five workers in India and one worker in Thailand.

Dozens of local workers are in the affected areas. All MCC workers are safe.—*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

To make a contribution

Those wanting to help with relief efforts in Indonesia can make donations in U.S. dollars to the Bank Internasional Indonesia (BII), account number 205 007 2986 (Swift Code is IBBKIDJA) in Semarang. The account is under the name of Yohanes Sutanto. Eddy Sutjipto, former moderator of Indonesia's GKMI Mennonite conference and a Mennonite World Conference executive committee member, asked that internationals making direct donations e-mail one of the following people so that GKMI board members can confirm receipt of the donation: tantolie@cbn.net.id (Yohanes Sutanto, treasurer of GKMI) or sinodemi@idola.net.id (Timotius Adhi Dharma, executive secretary of GKMI).

Donations can also be forwarded to MCC's Earthquake Fund by calling 1-888-563-4676 or by logging onto www.mcc.org/asiaearthquake.

Historic bell moved to seminary campus

It rang over first Mennonite higher education institution in North America.

It was not Christmas bells that Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary was waiting to hear last December but the ringing of the historic bell inherited from the first Mennonite institution of higher learning in North America.

On Dec. 16, 2004, a new bell tower and the 140-year-old bell from the Wadsworth (Ohio) Institute returned to campus fully assembled and ready to place on the prepared foundations.

"This bell hasn't rung in over a century," says Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president. "We're eager to ring it again to call people to worship."

This bell hasn't rung in over a century. We're eager to ring it again to call people to worship. —Nelson Kraybill

AMBS received the bell two years ago from the community school corporation in Wadsworth that owned the property where the Wadsworth Institute once stood. Since 1923, when the original building was razed, the bell lay on the ground and later in a granite slab. On Oct. 20, 2002, when Wadsworth Mennonite Church celebrated its 150th anniversary, the bell was given to AMBS. Denton Croyle, retired dentist and archivist-historian for the congregation, played a key role in negotiating the gift.

Over the last six months, AMBS has had the bell refurbished and a steel tower constructed for it. These arrived on campus just before the end of the fall semester and now are installed between the Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount and the reading room of the library. The tower will be dedicated on Jan. 31, when the bell is used to call students to chapel on the first day of classes for the spring semester.

Mary E. Klassen

After decades of silence, the historic bell from the Wadsworth (Ohio) Institute now hangs from a new tower on the campus of AMBS and will once again call seminary students to worship.

Originally the bell hung in the cupola of Wadsworth Institute, which offered training from 1868 to 1878 for ministers and church workers. Although the school operated for only 10 years, its influence was significant. It gave a foundation to the emergence of other educational institutions in the church: Halstead (Kan.) Seminary, which led to the founding of Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., in 1888; The Witmarsum Theological Seminary, which was part of Bluffton (Ohio) College from 1914 to 1931, and Mennonite Biblical Seminary which began in Chicago in 1945 and moved to Elkhart, Ind., in 1958.

The tower was designed by the Troyer Group of Mishawaka, Ind., as a gift to the seminary. The tower is funded in part by the 1954 classes of Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Goshen Biblical Seminary, the two seminaries that came together to form AMBS. These graduates were the first who, as students in Chicago and Goshen, Ind., participated in joint classes between the two seminaries. In connection with their 50th anniversary on campus in September 2004, class members made contributions to the tower.—*Mary E. Klassen of AMBS News Service*

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Interns consider call to pastoral ministry

Lilly-funded program at Eastern Mennonite Seminary includes 15 churches.

A program at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) is helping people explore their potential and gifts for pastoral ministry. "Culture of Call," the initiative funded by a Lilly Endowment grant, is teaching congregations how to tap potential participants for the program.

Currently in the second of the three-stage effort, leaders in pilot congregations are identifying young people—or those in midcareer—who have pastoral leadership gifts and then inviting them to serve as interns on the congregation's leadership team.

The first stage involved a series of vocations banquets and a "Ministry Sunday" emphasis in several Mennonite conferences. The seminary also held a two-day retreat in December 2003 that included 45 church leaders representing 15 pilot congregations from the four cooperating conferences: Franconia, Lancaster, Ohio and Virginia.

According to Del Glick, director of church partnerships at EMS, a major portion of the time together was spent hearing reports from those congregations who have an internship plan in place. The group also discussed key ingredients of planning and implementing a congregational intern plan and listened to concerns and ideas from those considering taking part, Glick says.

Randy Coblentz, pastor at Williamsburg Mennonite, shared his congregation's experience in identifying an intern from within the congregation. This person will serve an eight-month internship in a variety of roles—preaching, visitation and outreach, and administration.

"I see this pilot program being a discernment tool—is this person being called to the ministry," Coblentz says. "We need a fresh approach to identifying pastoral leaders and assisting them in spiritual formation and equipping for leadership before the need arises for a new pastor."

Jim Bishop

Pastors (left to right) Merlin L. Miller, Randy Coblentz, Harry Jarretta and Ed Heatwole at a gathering of "pilot congregations" in the Culture of Call program.

We need a fresh approach to identifying pastoral leaders and assisting them in spiritual formation. —Randy Coblentz

"The next step is to bring together participants in the 2003 events as cohorts for a training process," Glick says. "We also plan to invite more congregations to join this three-year commitment of calling forth people from their congregations to serve as interns on the leadership teams and to train them accordingly.

"The resources and training are not programs imposed on them by the seminary," Glick says. "Rather, what emerges will be based on mutual partnerships driven by needs identified by the conferences and congregations."

More information on the Culture of Call program is available by contacting Glick at 202-398-7234, email DelGlick@yahoo.com.—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University News Service*

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Trees on ice: storm hits Newton

This branch of a cottonwood tree at the home of Associate Editor Gordon Houser is one of many that fell in Newton, Kan., after an ice storm hit the area on Jan. 4. As of Jan. 5, about 15,000 customers in Newton were without electricity, making the town of about 18,000 the hardest-hit per-capita of any town in Kansas. The U.S. government declared 56 counties in Kansas a federal disaster area. Initial estimates of damage were about $6 million.

The Great Plains office of Mennonite Church USA, in Newton, closed its doors Jan. 4-6 because of the storm. Local churches took in people and helped others with cleanup of branches. Two Mennonite congregations in Newton could not meet in their meetinghouses because they had no electricity. First Mennonite met on Jan. 9 at the facilities of Faith Mennonite, then organized groups to help various members with cleanup. By Jan. 10, most people had their electricity restored. TM

Jeanne Houser

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WORKERS

Detweiler, Dennis M., was ordained Nov. 7 for ministry at Perkiomenville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Drescher-Lehman, Sandra, was ordained Oct. 31 for ministry at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

McMichael, Gary John, was licensed Sept. 8 as minister at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Nussbaum, Scott, was licensed Dec. 12 as associate pastor of youth and young adults at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Reppert, Sallie Louise, was licensed Sept. 8 for specific ministry at Bally (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Sell, Daniel Alan and Mary Sue Benner, were licensed Sept. 8 for specific ministry at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Unruh, James, was ordained Dec. 12 as pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, South Hutchinson, Kan.

Weidner, Mark L., began Sept. 1 as minister at Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bogle, Polly Joan, Dec. 1, to Mike and Celesti Buller Bogle, Windom, Minn.

Boyles, Amanda Nicole, Dec. 17, to Dave and Michele Bacino Boyles, Lansdale, Pa.

Early, Joshua, Dec. 9, to Christian and Annmarie Early, Harrisonburg, Va.

Eberly, Sellah Grace, Dec. 23, to Scott and Lori Swartz Eberly, Portland, Ore.

Harrison, Jacob Michael, Nov. 16, to Thomas and Laura Ketelsen Harrison, Sioux City, Iowa.

Jantzen, Dylan Henry, Dec. 16, to Dean and Kori Eckert Jantzen, Akron, Pa.

Leichty, Taryn Rayanna, Dec. 13, to Michael and Melanie Schotsman Leichty, Wellman, Iowa.

Pauls, Abigail Lynelle, Nov. 12, to Timothy and Amy Wallace Pauls, Philadelphia.

Reinford, Leandra Nicole, Dec. 6, to Joe and Amy Derstine Reinford, Telford, Pa.

Rissler, Andrew Hoyt, Dec. 27, to James and Christina Burnham Rissler, Chicago, Ill.

Schrock, Eli Marinaldo, Jan. 2, 1997, received for adoption Dec. 13 by Richard and Amy Slagell Schrock, Foosland, Ill.

Thompson, Eliza Grace, Dec. 14, to Chris and Jennifer Sutherland Thompson, Harrisonburg, Va.

Umble, Juliana Raine, Dec. 4, to Ryan and Bethany Freed Umble, Ephrata, Pa.

Wiens, Jacob Dietrich, Nov. 18, to John and Carmen Pauls Wiens, Fresno, Calif.

DEATHS

Anders, Margaret Mae, 78, Langhorne, Pa., died Dec. 17 of cancer. Spouse: Reuben D. Anders. Parents: John and Helen Garis Crouthamel. Children: Larry, R. Philip, J. Thomas, J. Renee Benner, M. Dolores, Rebecca A. Smith; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 23 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Bontrager, Orvan, 94, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 10. Spouse: Esther Greenawalt Bontrager. Parents: Rollin and Nellie Bontrager. Children: Carolyn Albrecht, Mildred Wideman, Marion; stepchildren; Jane Farrell, Fred Greenawalt; 15 grandchildren; five step-grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren; seven step-great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 13 at Emma Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Burkholder, R. Dewitt, 71, Bridgewater, Va., died Dec. 24 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Hannah Driver Burkholder. Parents: Roy Dewitt Sr. and Mary Rodes Burkholder. Children: Darlene Rounds, Kenton; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Parkview Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

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Derstine, Margaret L., 87, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 13. Spouse: LeRoy M. Derstine (deceased). Parents: John and Kathryn Moyer Landis. Children: James, Ivan, Gerald, Peggy (Margaret) Conrad; nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 17 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Frey, Mervin, 61, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 5. Spouse: Lydia Peachey Frey. Parents: Joseph E. and Elizabeth Bontrager Frey. Children: Christopher, Mark, Margaret Stuckey; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Gehman, Ralph L., 56, Telford, Pa., died Dec. 7 of a heart attack. Spouse: Linda Ehst Gehman. Parents: Laverne and Edith Landis Gehman. Children: Philip K., Jill; one grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Geissinger, Russel Shultz, 71, Zionsville, Pa., died Oct. 3. Spouse: Marjorie Bleam Geissinger. Parents: Clarence and Della Shultz Geissinger. Children: Margaret E. Sabulsky, Rebekah S. Flack; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 9 at Upper Milford Mennonite Church, Zionsville.

Huxman, Elma "Blondie", 83, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 28. Spouse: (1st) John L. Huxman (deceased), (2nd) Elmer Ratzlaff (deceased). Parents: Benjamin B. and Elizabeth Stucky Krehbiel. Children: John B., Jody L.; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Moyer, Eva H., 82, Souderton, Pa., died Dec. 6. Parents: John and Anna Halteman Moyer. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Nafziger, Ephraim, 86, Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 19. Spouse: Mary Emma Kennel Nafziger. Parents: Elia and Magdalena Nafziger. Children: Eldon, Barbara Miller, John; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 24 at Millwood Mennonite Church, Gap, Pa.

Newcomer, Marvin, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 6 of aspiration pneumonia. Spouse: Alice Zehr Newcomer. Parents: John and Pearl Maust Newcomer. Children: Jill Erb, Kelly; six grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Plank, Abigail, 1, Lone Tree, Iowa, died Dec. 8. Parents: Rodney and Tami Williams Plank. Funeral: West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Rupp, Linda Balzer, 92, North Newton, Kan., died Dec. 28. Spouse: Weldon Rupp (deceased). Parents: Peter B. and Lizzie Siemens Balzer. Children: Berneil Rupp Mueller, Mark, Bob (deceased), Glenn (deceased), Tim; 11 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 1 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Shank, Luke J., 80, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 11 of cancer. Spouse: Anna Elizabeth Metzler Shank (deceased). Parents: Harvey E. and Anna Martin Shank. Children: Duane, Calliope (Dottie), Debbie Shank Miller, Dan; six grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 14 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Showalter, Howard D., 90, Harrisonburg, Va., died Dec. 27. Spouse: Irene Geiser Showalter. Parents: H.D.H. and Flora Grove Showalter. Children: Phyllis Ramer, Glen, Janet Shank, Ellen Heatwole, Lois Moyers, Dennis; 14 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Stuckey, LaMar, 79, Stryker, Ohio, died Dec. 23. Spouse: Kathryn Beck Stuckey. Parents: Dan and Velma Christner Stuckey. Children: Regg, Bruce; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker.

Verhoeven, Clara Veen, 87, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 1. Spouse: (1st) Simon Van Veen (deceased), (2nd) Kees (Cornelius) Verhoeven (deceased). Parents: Christiaan and Anna Marie Van Der Plas Veen. Children: Anna Marie Hooley, Willy (Mike) Dominiack, Jack Van Veen; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Weidner, Susan McElwain, 61, Perkasie, Pa., died Dec. 21. Spouse: Mark Weidner. Parents: Leo and Lena Beidler McElwain. Children: Lisa Adams, Beky, Tim, Elizabeth; three grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Allentown, Pa.

White, Glen, 91, Wellman, Iowa, died Dec. 14 following a brief illness. Spouse: Amy Martin White. Parents: William and Magdalena Miller White. Children: Crystal Tschantz, Cynthia Schlabaugh, Martin; one grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 17 at Yoder Powell Funeral Home, Kalona, Iowa.

Zook, Vernon, 90, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 6. Spouse: Marguerite Emde Zook. Parents: Lewis and Clara Stutzman Zook. Children: Don, Linda Paine, Janice Leodalter (deceased); six grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 10 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

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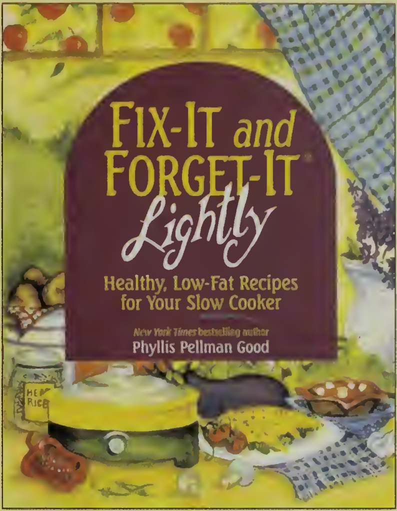
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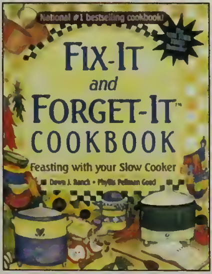
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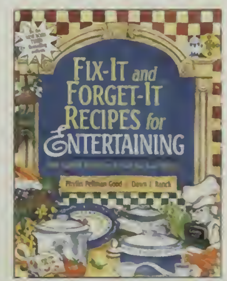
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For more information contact Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, Associate Dean for Leadership Education, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517; jglongenecker@ambs.edu; 574-296-6207 or visit www.ambs.edu/php/welcome/wel_news.php.

Hesston College seeks a ***full-time history instructor and history writer*** to begin August 2005. The position includes half-time teaching that could include courses in U.S. history and world civilizations and half-time writing the history of Hesston College. Candidates should have teaching experience, evidence of historical writing ability, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite Church and the mission of Hesston College. M.A. required, Ph.D. desired. Please send a letter of application, resumé and reference list to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applicants will begin Jan. 24 and continue until the position is filled.

Hesston College seeks a ***full-time psychology instructor*** beginning August 2005. Qualifications: teaching experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite Church and the mission of Hesston College. M.A. required, doctorate desired. Please send a letter of application, resumé and reference list to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applicants will begin Jan. 24 and continue until the position is filled.

Hesston College seeks a ***resident director for women's residence hall*** (nine-month, full-time position) and a ***resident director for men's residence hall*** (nine-month, half-time position). As members of the Student Life Department team, each resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff and assist in enforcement of campus lifestyle standards. Qualifications include strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church and to the mission of Hesston College, leadership ability, and listening and relational skills. Bachelor's degree or higher preferred. Minimum two-year commitment. Apply by resumé to Lamar Roth, Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email lamarr@hesston.edu or call 620-327-8234 for information. Review of applicants will begin March 1 and continue until positions are filled. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

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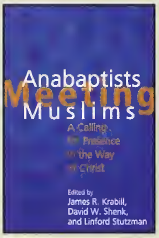

Anabaptists Meeting Muslims: *A Calling for Presence in the Way of Christ*

This book reveals a rich diversity of Anabaptist engagement with Muslims around the world. Here are essays and reports from missionaries in the field, administrators at the mission agencies, professors and scholars of mission, and theologians. Among these voices is a spirit of dialogue, questioning, agreeing, amazement, and sometimes, dissent. ***Anabaptists Meeting Muslims*** does not seek to present a homogenized view that flows through a predetermined Anabaptist ideological grid. Rather, it is a forum for giving and receiving counsel and a place to share stories and reflections that will encourage and help to equip Christians for the calling to presence in the way of Christ.

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For nearly five centuries Mennonites have maintained a distinct theological identity from the Catholic church and other Protestant groups. This short, engaging book gives a brief account of what Mennonites believe. From the beginnings of the Anabaptist (or Mennonite) movement in the 16th-century, to biblical interpretation, baptism, understandings of the church, ethics, and the complex question of denominationalism, popular writer, speaker, and scholar, **John D. Roth** provides a solid framework for on-going conversations about faithful discipleship in the Mennonite church today.

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"Farming with Values that Last 2005: Growers and Eaters in Communion," Feb. 25-27, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center,** Mount Pleasant, Pa.

Sustainable farming conference for those led by their Christian faith to grow, market and share food for all God's people. Workshops, worship, posters from farms and ministries, commercial exhibits, music, storytelling. Dan Guenthner and Margaret Pennings, Eric and Ann Nordell, Don Kretschmann, Roy Brubaker. Contact: Cheryl Paulovich, Cheryl@laurelville.org, 800-839-1021, www.laurelville.org.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of ***administrative assistant*** for the Africa department. This position requires understanding and respect for the spectrum of MCC connections, ability to work well under pressure and deadlines, ability to work in an open office environment, good organizational skills, competence in detail work and skill in office procedures and computer use.

As with all MCC personnel, this person also needs to be a Christian, active church member and committed to nonviolent peacemaking. Contact Prem Dick, psd@mcc.org, or Anna Reimer, awr@mcc.org, 717-859-1151.

You are a ***licensed practical nurse or RN*** who wants to get back to hands-on nursing in a small, home-like setting. You long for the time and support to actually engage your patients. You'd rather work deeply with 10 patients than superficially with 30. Your dream is to be part of a team that nurtures emotional and spiritual healing even when physical health declines. You have at least three years experience in AIDS or hospice care and are licensed in D.C. You want to grow in your ability to accompany—with exquisite attention and skillful compassion—those who are facing the end of their lives.

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For more information, please contact Patricia Wudel, Executive Director, at 202-265-7174. Or send resumé to patty@josephshouse.org or fax 202-234-8195.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***F/T short-term missions director*** to serve as vision carrier for EMM's short-term discipleship training and missions. Qualifications: experience in short- or long-term missions, good interpersonal skills with the postmodern generation, passion for EMM's vision, leadership skills and strong initiative. College degree preferred. Begins as soon as possible after March 7. Contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717 898-2251) by Feb. 4.

Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 thru G8, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire summer 2005. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News, VA 23602; or LJShowalter@aol.com.

Norristown New Life, a 115-member urban, multicultural, Spanish/English congregation is seeking a ***half-time (2.5 days per week) bilingual Hispanic associate pastor*** to serve as a member of our pastoral leadership team.

We are prayerfully seeking someone who is able to work with a leadership team, has a passion for evangelism and community outreach, is gifted in both preaching and teaching, has a vision for urban church growth, is flexible and spiritually mature and has an Anabaptist understanding and commitment.

For more information contact Norristown New Life, 3 E. Marshall St., Norristown, PA19401; 610-279-5433; email NNL3@Juno.com; attention Admino Oritz, search committee chair.

Position: The four-year Interpreter Training Program located in the **Department of Modern Classical Languages and Literatures at Goshen College** is seeking an ***assistant professor.*** Appointment begins fall 2005. Applications will be reviewed Feb.15 and will continue until the position is filled. Faculty responsibilities begin Aug.15.

Qualifications: A master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred, in linguistics, education, sign language interpreting or a related field; prefer someone with multicultural experience; ASLTA certification or working toward certification. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit both strong professional and teaching credentials.

Skills: Excellent aptitude and ability in second-language teaching.

The college: Goshen College is a four-year liberal arts institution dedicated to the development of informed, articulate, sensitive and responsible Christians. As a ministry of the Mennonite Church, the college seeks to integrate Christian values with educational and professional life. Education is viewed as a moral activity that produces servant leaders for the church and world.

To apply: Please send a letter of application, resumé and three professional or business letters of reference by email, fax or postal mail to Minerva Andriotis, Administrative Assistant for Human Resources, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526-4795, telephone 574-535-7707, fax 574-535-7060, email hr@goshen.edu. Complete the online Personnel Information Form. Women and minority people are especially encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative-action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

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Bashing the media gets out of hand

Gordon Houser

Often I hear someone complain about "the media." Just yesterday (Jan. 2) a friend who converted to Catholicism eight years ago said the media is always attacking the Catholic Church, "and they always quote people outside the church, never an archbishop," he said.

I did not take this personally, assuming he did not think about me working for the media. And I did not point out that his statement—coming more out of emotion than reason—was wrong. I let it go. It's one of our privileges, to bash the media.

Unfortunately, the bashing is becoming much more serious, both in our nation and abroad.

In the past few years, the U.S. Department of Justice has subpoenaed reporters in several high-profile cases to disclose the names of their confidential sources. In most of these, the reporters have refused on First Amendment grounds and subsequently faced heavy fines and jail. (For more background see "Threats of Jail: Is Journalism's 'Fragile Privilege' at Risk" by Geri L. Dreiling in *National Catholic Reporter*, Dec. 17, 2004.)

"News organizations such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Dow Jones and Company, Gannett Company, Bloomberg and Fox News are asking courts to recognize a reporter's privilege," writes Dreiling, a lawyer and writer.

Without this privilege, journalists believe, their ability to report about corruption and abuse is hampered, and the public will be left in the dark about their government's activities. And insiders will be less likely to talk about wrongdoing if they fear being exposed.

What is at stake, says media law professor Jane Kirtley, is "a net loss of information to the public."

That same public seems to have a love-hate relationship with the media. People want to know what's going on, but they carry a deep suspicion of certain, if not all, media.

Meanwhile, an even greater bashing of journalists is occurring worldwide. According to the International Federation of Journalists, the number of journalists and other media staff killed around the world reached a record high in 2004. That death toll was 120, mainly because of the conflict in Iraq that claimed the lives of more than 50 journalists and other members of the media last year.

Another organization, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), counted 56 journalists killed in 2004, evidently not including "other media staff." Of these, 36 were murdered, continuing a long-term trend.

Another trend, according to CPJ, is that the killers usually go unpunished. In all but nine cases in 2004, CPJ found, the murders were carried out with impunity.

This death toll crosses the globe—from the Philippines, where eight journalists were slain in a series of attacks; to Mexico, where drug-fueled violence claimed the lives of two journalists; to Gambia, where editor and press freedom advocate Deyda Hydara was gunned down just days after denouncing a repressive new press law.

Even in Iraq, reports CPJ, where crossfire was the leading cause of death among journalists, at least nine of the 23 journalists killed were deliberately targeted.

I write as a journalist, alarmed at these trends. Journalists—humans all—make mistakes, and some have selfish motives. But most work within a system that seeks to find what is true—or at least part of what is true. Without that access to pursuing truth, we are all worse off.

According to the Gospel of John: "People loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed" (3:19b-20).

One of the tasks of the media we all love to hate is to expose deeds of darkness. While that task is carried out imperfectly, we all need to have it carried out. Instead of simply complaining about the media, perhaps we can all contribute toward shining some light. TM

FILMS

In this year of numerous biopics, perhaps the most lavish and elaborately made is Martin Scorsese's **The Aviator** (PG-13). Such films generally require a subject who is larger than life, and Howard Hughes fits that description. Scorsese shows Hughes as a flawed but gigantic figure who changed the course of aviation in America. In some ways he is America as he illustrates a land of opportunity, genius, greed and fear.

VIDEOS/DVDS

Perhaps the 2004 film most seen and quoted by high school and college students is **Napoleon Dynamite** (PG). This low-budget film about a nerdy high school student in Idaho is all about lack of pretense. Without much dramatic plot, Napoleon puts up with ridicule and befriends other outcasts. The characters are all over the top, yet it retains a certain charm. Napoleon's dance is a highlight.

BEST BOOKS OF 2004

- **Gilead: A Novel** by Marilynne Robinson
- **The Known World: A Novel** by Edward P. Jones
- **The Life You Save May Be Your Own** by Paul Elie
- **Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence** by Stanley Hauerwas
- **Soul Brothers: Men in the Bible Speak to Men Today** by Richard Rohr

BOOKS

A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life by Parker J. Palmer (Jossey-Bass, 2004, $22.95) outlines the use of "circles of trust" to help free individuals' souls toward wholeness. Palmer sums up his message thus: "All we need to do is bring down the wall that separates us from our own souls and deprives the world of the soul's regenerative powers."

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Everett J. Thomas

Christian churches together

I ask … that they may all be one … so that the world may believe that you have sent me.—from John 17

How much unity to have with other Christians is a complicated matter for Mennonites. Our commitment to ecumenism often depends on which "other Christians" we are talking about. The unspoken logic goes something like this: I will gladly bond with other Christians if they are the ones whose convictions or traditions I accept. But if my Mennonite sisters and brothers want to bond with Christians with whom I do not resonate, then I am opposed to joining with those Christians.

No wonder Jesus prayed for unity among his followers during the last supper with his disciples.

Mennonites in the past may have sensed that formalizing ecumenical relations would polarize our church. Perhaps that is why—with the exception of a brief stint in the early 1900s, when General Conference Mennonite Church joined the Federal Council of Churches in America—Mennonites have not developed formal relations with other Christian denominations.

Or, as John D. Roth suggests, suspicion about what could happen to us may be a reason we hold ourselves separate.

"Many have feared that ecumenical dialogue will lead inevitably to a watering down of doctrine and a loss of a distinctive identity," Roth said (Jan. 4).

We already are ecumenical at most levels of our lives, both individually and corporately.

But as Roth and others point out, we have many ecumenical experiences: Some of us join in Billy Graham evangelistic crusades and parachurch phenomena like Promise Keepers. We borrow from Willow Creek's megachurch model and use Rick Warren's purpose-driven materials for congregational life and spiritual formation.

There are many ways we are influenced by other Christians. Some of us join right-to-life organizations led by other Christians. Some of us join peace and justice groups that focus on Christ's teachings but transcend denominational lines. Many Mennonites draw daily encouragement from Christian radio stations. Others read magazines such as *Christianity Today* or *The Christian Century* or *Sojourners*.

But the ecumenical resource that bonds us most closely to the broader Christian community is the Common Lectionary and the seasons of the church year. Many of us recently began the church year with the Advent season. A growing number of Mennonites will soon observe that period of preparation before Easter called Lent. Like most mainline Protestant denominations, Mennonite congregations will organize each Sunday's worship service in 2005 using the lection for Year A.

So we already are ecumenical at most levels of our lives. This year, our denomination may be invited to formalize such relations by joining a new group called Christian Churches Together in the USA (www.christianchurchestogether.org).

Christian Churches Together in the USA is a new organization. It began in September 2001 with a meeting of church leaders in the United States wanting to explore "the need for expanding fellowship, unity and witness among diverse expressions of Christian faith today."

In January 2003, some 55 denominational and other church leaders convened a second meeting and agreed on an organizational plan, including theological affirmations, purposes, categories of participation, a governing structure and a proposed timeline. These proposals are now being presented to various denominations and organizations; when 25 denominations and organizations sign up, the group will officially launch.

Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag recently told the Executive Board that he may be bringing them a formal recommendation for our denomination to join Christian Churches Together in the USA. If so, delegates to Charlotte 2005 will have the final word.

If the recommendation is placed before the delegate body at Charlotte 2005, we will need to consider carefully whether formalizing our bonds with other Christians will strengthen us as a young denomination. The criterion for the decision is Jesus' prayer in John 17 when he asked God to unify his followers so others might believe.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

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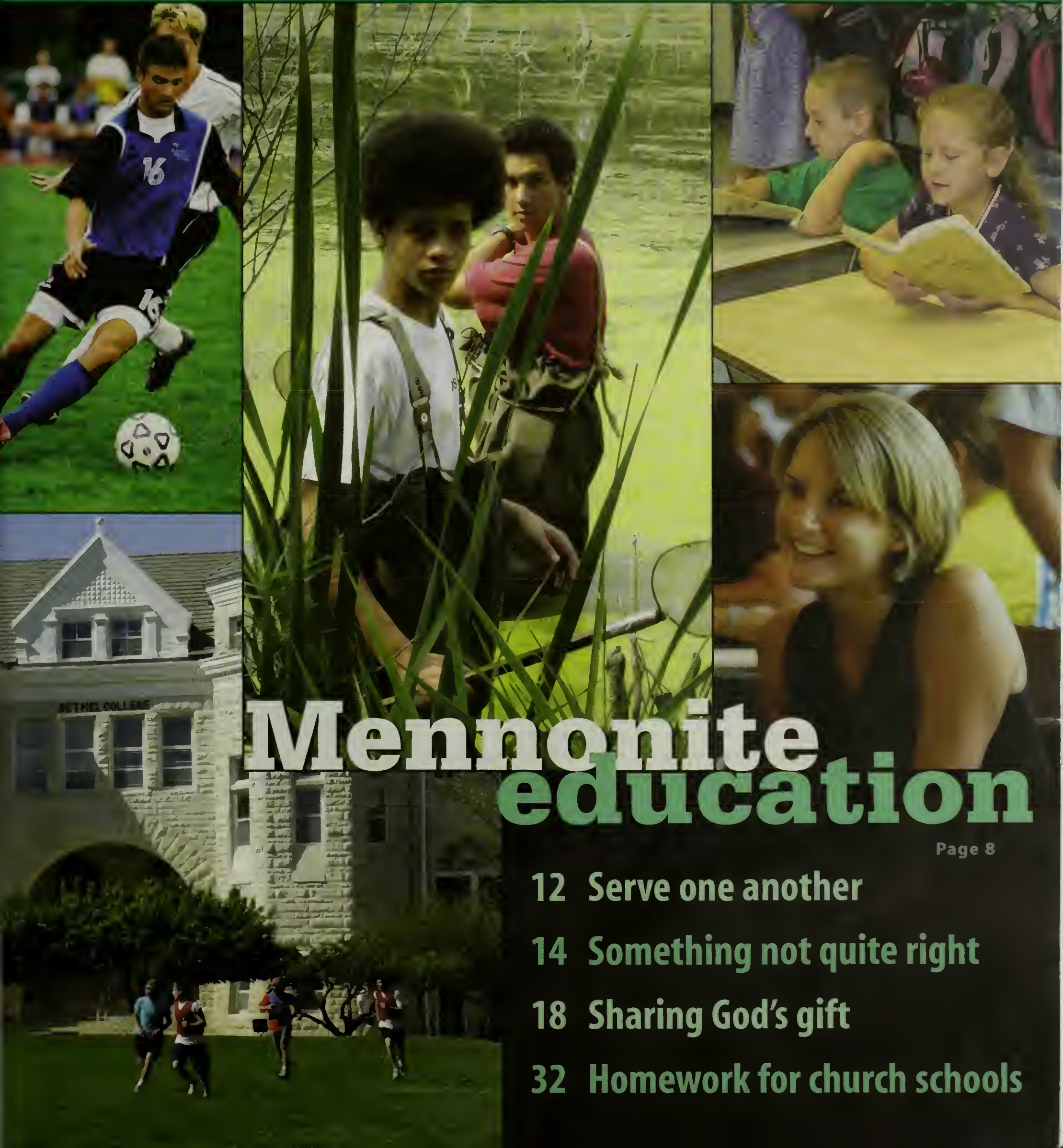

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Gifts and gratefulness—and sin

Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

With a jolt I realized I had sinned. God was pointing out to me that the humility I thought was healthy and proper for a Christian was really distorted and sinful. God never intended me to hide the gifts that had been so lovingly poured into me. Furthermore, when I failed to put those gifts to the use God intended, my sin was hurting the church I loved so much, for those gifts were meant to be shared for the good of the whole. What a shock!

It has been 10 years since that particular realization of sin. I repented of it then, and I find I must continue to repent, since owning my gifts does not come easily to me. Old habits and belief systems are hard to change.

Recently I attended Music and Worship Leaders Weekend at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mount Pleasant, Pa. What a wealth of wonderful, God-given gifts were present in that crowd. I am so thankful for those willing to share their gifts.

The rich sound of blended voices joined in song is one none of us is able to make alone. If those with the gift of singing had refused to open their mouths in the name of humility, our worship would have been greatly impaired. I sank into the sound and worshiped the One who created us with voice boxes and who gifted some to write music, others to form words into meaningful verse and still others to play musical instruments.

We sang as one, yet I was also aware of individual voices around me. I am grateful to the rich bass voice coming from somewhere behind me. Even when my soprano is deepened by illness, I can never reach those notes with such rich depth. Sometimes I was blessed by a clear tenor, and I rejoiced. Tenors are rare birds in ordinary congregations and are therefore precious. As we sang new song after new song, the strong alto beside me sang with confidence and accuracy. What a wonderful gift of sight reading. And I heard sopranos in the room singing notes not printed yet perfectly suited to the music and message.

The gifts of singing were not the only ones present. To some God gave the gift of asking probing questions of the biblical text and illuminating that same text for others. To others God gave the gift of careful listening and gathering our experiences into carefully worded prayers that spoke for all. To some God gave the gift of organization, that the weekend might run smoothly. To others God gave the gift of creating visual beauty. Some were given the gift of imagining and bringing truth to life through drama and humor. Some used their gifts of planning and preparing meals for large crowds. Others used their gifts to help us when plumbing failed. So many gifted people (and I'm certain I haven't named them all) offering their gifts, benefiting the whole, surely is a pleasure to God.

Yet even as I marveled at the variety and richness of gifts all around me, I felt sins, not of false humility but of dissatisfaction and covetousness tugging at me. They have such wonderful gifts, Lord, I thought. Why couldn't I have those gifts instead of the ones you gave me? Why did God choose to give me my particular gifts and not those that belong to others?

What a slap in the face to the Giver of gifts! I don't want to insult the One who made me and gifted me. God says to us in 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV), "Each one should use whatever gift he (or she) has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." Another translation puts it this way: "God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you."

Praise God for the great variety of gifts that equip the church. May we nurture and manage our gifts well, that God's generosity may flow through us to one another and the world, in glory to God, the giver and gifter.

TheMennonite

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Homework for church schools—*Everett J. Thomas*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

No vote in 2005

I appreciated Everett J. Thomas' editorial ("Christian Churches Together," Jan. 18) on whether Mennonite Church USA might join the new organization of Christian Churches Together this summer. But we will not vote on this at Charlotte 2005. We will introduce the idea and ask for delegate discussion at tables, to be followed by a two-year inquiry process in many parts of the church.

Christian Churches Together has attracted our interest because it could assist us in being missional by being a network of churches, not an old-style ecumenical organization. Members will continue to stand on their own doctrinal statements. Decisions will be made by consensus. It is low cost and leans on organizational infrastructure. Unlike the National Association of Evangelicals or the National Council of Churches, its participants aim to cover a much larger theological spectrum. Five "families"—Evangelical/Pentecostal; Historic Protestant; Historic Racial/Ethnic; Orthodox; Roman Catholic—will compose a steering committee. Rather than taking actions in which everyone must agree, coalitions will form that are based on the core values and teachings of each denomination to create networks of affinity for specific witness. Their organizational plan can be found at www.christianchurchestogether.org.*—Jim Schrag, executive director, Mennonite Church USA*

Examine reasons for conventions

Everett J. Thomas' comments about Mennonite Church Canada ("A Watershed Year," Jan. 4) were deeply disappointing. It is even sadder if Thomas' dismal view of the prospects for Canadian-U.S. interaction and cooperation is true. The reasons given for the possibility that Charlotte 2005 may be the last binational meeting need to be examined more closely. First, the decision of Mennonite Church Canada to hold its annual meeting in Charlotte, N.C., seems gracious in view of the "little inclination on the part of Mennonite Church USA to travel to Canada." The reason can't be distance. Elkhart, Ind., Lancaster, Pa., and Newton, Kan., are closer to Kitchener, Ont., than to Charlotte. Second, if the insistence on keeping youth and adult assemblies together means that Mennonite Church USA will always be doomed to meet in an expensive convention center in a southeastern city on the Fourth of July weekend, perhaps we need a cost-benefit analysis that takes into account other values. Third, what is the reason there is "less binational structure bridging the two denominations"? Is this lack of vision or the normal kind of turf struggles when large organizations reorganize?*—Edgar Metzler, Goshen, Ind.*

Don't presume outcome

As a pastor in North Central Conference, I think Everett J. Thomas' editorial claim that Charlotte 2005 will be a gathering "where we will know who we are" ("A Watershed Year," Jan. 4) is presumptive at best. North Central Mennonite Conference's executive committee has discussed the Mennonite Church USA membership issue extensively and is favorable toward joining. However, they have stopped short of making a recommendation to join, and the process of congregational discernment along with face-to-face conversation among the ministers of the conference is only beginning.

Conference leadership has slated our annual pastor-spouse retreat as the time when these conversations will formally begin, with the expectation that congregational meetings will follow. At the annual meeting of the conference, congregations will first be polled as to whether they are ready to cast their votes on the question of membership in Mennonite Church USA. Although many would like the decision to be finalized, it is my understanding from my conference leaders that only if the congregations affirm a full readiness to cast those votes will the conference present a final ballot on the membership question. At this point in time the ministers have had no opportunity to share together as a whole group about the positives and negatives that are part of membership. Allow us the time and the means to engage our necessary process without putting words into our mouths and without presuming upon the outcomes of our decision-making.—*Marty Wenger, International Falls, Minn.*

Third Way Café is a Web site

Thanks to *The Mennonite* for listing the top 20 questions asked in 2004 to Third Way Café ("Is a

IN THIS ISSUE

By our count (on pages 16-17), 42 schools are affiliated with Mennonite Church USA through Mennonite Education Agency, the newly formed agency that connects these institutions to the denomination. In a recent report, MEA calculated a total head-count—not full-time equivalency—enrollment of 15,003 when the current school year started last fall (205 more students than in 2003). Because Mennonite Church USA observes Church Education Sunday each year on the first Sunday of February, we focus on our church schools in this issue with interviews (page 8), a college student's first-person account (page 12) and a mother's poignant advice about leaving a child at college (page 14). We also arranged for this month's Leadership column to be written by MEA executive director Carlos Romero (page 18). Coincidentally, MEA was the denominational agency under review during the most recent meeting of the Executive Board (page 19).*—Editors*

401k Retirement Account Gambling?" Jan. 4). We would like to clarify that Third Way Café is a Web site at www.thirdway.com produced and operated by Mennonite Media for Mennonite Church USA. In recent weeks, a new question made us think: As a nun I have taken vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. What do Mennonites believe about Matthew 19:16-30 and how do they fulfill this in their lives?—*Melodie Davis, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Oil and peace

I read with interest about the alternative "ribbon" magnets that Duane and Elvera Johnson created for people to display on their vehicles ("Kansas Couple Creates Peace Magnets," Jan. 4).

While I am glad there are alternative messages to "Support Our Troops" and "God Bless America," I suggest another way to communicate our message of peace. Rather than seek alternative messages to display on vehicles, consider instead reducing dependence on vehicles and thus on oil.

If we as a society were not so dependent on our cars—and thus oil—would there even be a war in Iraq? Think of it, Mennonites intentionally choosing where they live based on a desire to be able to walk, bike, use public transit or carpool to work, school, church, the grocery store, the library and the doctor. This is not a pipe dream. It is not only possible (as well as healthy and fun), it is an essential part to bringing the message of peace to our troubled world. I recommend the city of Philadelphia as a great place to live for those who want to try a life that is less dependent on a vehicle.—*Carol Martin Johnson, Philadelphia*

How to talk about it?

Thank you for John Roth's profound article entitled "Give and Take" (Jan. 4). I have one big question: How do I get my congregation to actually discuss what traditions we shall borrow, what traditions we shall reject and why? We Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonites so assiduously avoid discussing anything with potential for disagreement and thereby allow liberal and damaging traditions entrance and acceptance. We do not want to be different or prophetic to the world around us. That mentality frustrates me immensely.—*Maynard Shirk, Conestoga, Pa.*

Stereotyping Mennonites

I am not a Mennonite and I know little of your beliefs. But I do care about a particular brand of commentary that appears to be occurring more and more frequently on the airwaves. I am making you aware of this because I feel that pressure needs to come to bear upon the intolerant and the bigoted.

On Martin Luther King Day—a day celebrating the life of a man who promoted equality and tolerance—I could not believe my ears as I listened to WTAM 1100 out of Cleveland. The Mike "Mr. Know-it-all" Trivisonno show was talking about Mennonites who left their homes to volunteer and help in the recovery from the recent natural disasters. His co-host, Kim Mihalik, said, "Did they leave their farms or compounds?"

This uninformed stereotyping of a group of people is the kind of divisive hate-based radio that I passionately want to stifle. I suppose that what concerns me most is the negative connotation of the word "compound." Use this information as you will. I wanted to make it known to someone who might have a bit more clout than a single voice such as mine.—*Ken Tarr, Renovo, Pa.*

Ashamed of Amish heritage

I urge all who have a computer to get online with David Yoder's Web site, www.AmishAbuse.com. You will be stunned, shocked, depressed and ashamed of the ongoing cases of family abuse among Amish and Mennonites. I am ashamed that I held my Amish heritage, faith and people above others. It was my sin. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. I should have realized and admitted to myself that evil, sin and Satan are everywhere and in everyone: always has been and always will be.—*Mary Ann Wiegel, Fargo, Ga.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

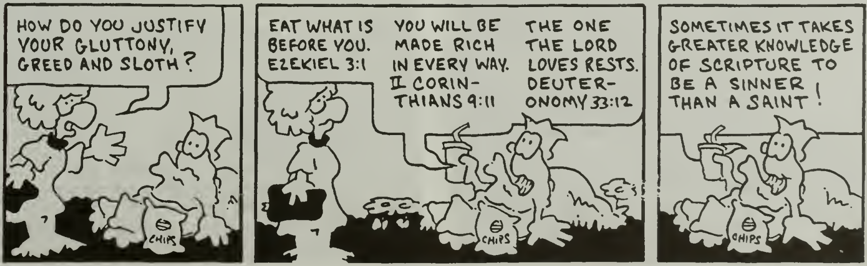
How often do you walk for recreation and/or transportation?

- ○ Every day (24%)
- ○ At least three times a week (41%)
- ○ Rarely (22%)
- ○ A physical disability does not allow me to walk (12%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


HOW DO YOU JUSTIFY YOUR GLUTTONY, GREED AND SLOTH?
EAT WHAT IS BEFORE YOU. EZEKIEL 3:1
YOU WILL BE MADE RICH IN EVERY WAY. II CORINTHIANS 9:11
THE ONE THE LORD LOVES RESTS. DEUTERONOMY 33:12
SOMETIMES IT TAKES GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE TO BE A SINNER THAN A SAINT!
CHIPS
CHIPS
CHIPS

IN BRIEF

MCC provides $6.9 million in food aid in 2004

Mennonite Central Committee provided a total of $6.9 million of food aid to 28 countries in 2004. For the year, Sudan received the most MCC food aid of any country, $1.5 million, followed by Ethiopia and India. MCC shipped a total of 6,939 metric tons of grains, beans, peas and lentils and 280 metric tons of canned meat. MCC spent $1.6 million to purchase local foods for relief and $534,000 on sustainable food production projects.—*MCC News Service*

Beer in heaven?

In the sixth century, St. Bridget of Ireland poetically conceived of heaven as a lake of beer where the Holy Family laps its frothy content for all eternity. Other Christians disagree, reports Religious News Service (Jan. 4). Mormons and Southern Baptists call for abstinence, as do Muslims and Buddhists; but Catholics, among other Christians, and Jews not only use alcohol ceremonially but view it as an enjoyable gift from God. Monks have brewed beer and distilled alcohol since the Middle Ages. Catholics call for moderation: Any abuse of God's gifts is sinful. Mormons eschew not only alcohol but tobacco, tea and coffee. Their upright lifestyle has made them favorite recruits for the FBI. —*The Christian Century*

CPT hears report of hidden detainees in Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq—On Jan. 4, Sheila Provencher and Cliff Kindy of Christian Peacemaker Teams met with Haji Ali in central Baghdad. Ali is a staff person for Victims of American Occupation Prison Association. He says he is the person in the famous picture from Abu Ghraib Prison showing a hooded detainee standing on a stool with electrical wires attached to his body. CPT has met several times with members of this group because of their direct connection to Iraqi detainees.

Haji Ali told the CPT workers that military base detention facilities hold detainees for long periods to cover up how many detainees the Multinational Forces are actually holding. Some media report that the detainee population has doubled since the U.S. assault on Fallujah last November, but the number is impossible to confirm because the prisoners are not in the official prisons such as Abu Ghraib and Bucca.

The International Red Cross reported last year that the United States holds 70 to 90 percent of Iraqi detainees without cause. With secret prisons and unknown numbers of Iraqi detainees, human rights groups have difficulty monitoring U.S. treatment of Iraqi detainees.—*CPT*

Art for Relief sale to help tsunami victims

Alf Redekopp and Nyoman Klassen check out the Art for Relief sale at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg. Over the Christmas break, Ray Dirks, curator of the gallery, was packing up an exhibition of 60 Indonesian artworks in preparation for their return trip home. He had the idea of offering the artworks for sale with a portion of proceeds going to support Mennonite Central Committee relief efforts in the stricken region. As of Jan. 11, the response had generated nine sales of artwork and $7,755. The gallery will donate all its commissions and the artists half their portion of sales to MCC's response to the tsunami. The remaining artist portions will go to the Indonesian artists to support their families and relatives in Indonesia.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Football dream leads to 25 years of ministry

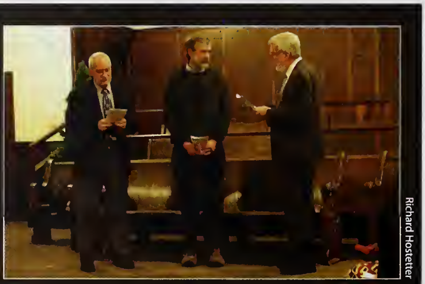
CHUN CHON, South Korea—Jan. 1 was significant for Erv Wiens. It marked 25 years since beginning his career in pastoral ministry, a calling that began with a mentor and a dream about football.

In 1979, friend and mentor Ralph Lebold asked Wiens, at that time a teacher, to consider pastoral ministry. Although he laughed at the time, six months later Wiens was in front of a congregation.

"I had this clear sense that God is doing God's work in the world through the church, and I definitely wanted to be a part of this incredible adventure." He is more convinced than ever that, in spite of its shortcomings, church is still God's primary vehicle for bringing in God's kingdom.

Wiens shares a dream that prepared him for his calling. In it he declined to play for a football team, even though it was something he always wanted to do. Because the field was wet and slippery, he refused to play for fear of being injured. At the conclusion of the game, the team came off the field muddy and bloody and beaten 49-0. In the dream he resolved never again to let his team down, no matter how dangerous it might be.

At age 62, Wiens is nearing retirement in a chronological sense. He and his wife, Marian, of Windsor (Ont.) Mennonite Fellowship, find their term of service with Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network drawing to a close this summer. Their assignment has been to assist the Jesus Village Church and its school in Chun Chon, South Korea.—*Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness*



Richard Hostetter

Peace pastor

From left, Wayne Hochstetler, conference minister for Illinois Mennonite Conference, officiates at the ordination of Doug Hostetter, ordained as Mennonite Church USA's first peace minister, at Evanston (Ill.) Mennonite Church on Dec. 12, 2004. Lloyd Miller, conference minister for Central District Conference, also officiates and is reading the vows of ordination.—*Mennonite Church USA News Service*

All in the family between Colorado and Chile

CONCEPCIÓN, Chile—A four-person delegation from Mountain Community Mennonite Church, Palmer Lake, Colo., traveled to Chile in November 2004 to visit Puerta del Rebaño (Door of the Sheepfold) in Concepción. Mountain Community pastor

Don Rheinheimer described their anticipation as that of long-lost siblings meeting for the first time.

Carlos Gallardo and Mónica Parada, the husband-wife pastoral team at Puerta del Rebaño, welcomed the visit as a possible answer to their prayer for stronger ties to the global Anabaptist family. *—Mennonite Mission Network*

AI adopts Vietnamese Mennonite prisoner

Amnesty International (AI) has adopted Le Thi Hong Lien, a Mennonite in Vietnam, as a prisoner of conscience. She is reportedly suffering from severe mental illness in the prison infirmary at Chi Hoa Prison, Ho Chi Minh City. Her condition is said to be deteriorating, and she is being denied access to the treatment she needs.

Le Thi Hong Lien, a teacher for the Vietnamese Mennonite Christian Church, was arrested in June 2004 along with other members of the Mennonite community. On Nov. 12, 2004, she was sentenced to 12 months in prison on charges of "resisting a person performing official duty."

In recent months her mental health is reported to have seriously deteriorated, says AI. Prison guards reportedly told relatives that they did not have the means to care for inmates with such a severe illness and explained that they have resorted to tying her hands and feet to the bed. She is said to be receiving no treatment for her condition, which is likely to deteriorate further.

During her imprisonment fellow inmates reported that Le Thi Hong Lien was beaten by prison guards, with a report of a particularly savage beating given to her by a guard escorting her to and from her trial.*—Amnesty International*

rayer of blessing for cross-cultural groups

rian Martin Burkholder (left)), campus pastor at Eastern lennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Donald R. Clymer, irector of cross-cultural programs at EMU, lead a prayer of lessing on two student groups about to embark on semester-ong cross-cultural study programs to Guatemala/Bolivia and ew Zealand/Fiji.*—EMU News Service*

Mennonite educator J. Winfield Fretz dies

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Joseph Winfield Fretz, 94, died Jan. 24 after a brief illness at Kidron-Bethel Retirement Center in North Newton. He was founding president of Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. (1963-73). He taught sociology at Bethel College, North Newton, from 1942 to 1963 and at the University of Waterloo from 1963 to 1979. He was appointed acting president of Bethel prior to being called to Conrad Grebel. After retiring, he served as acting president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., 1983-84. He authored numerous publications and several books on Mennonites.

J. Winfield Fretz

Fretz was born Sept. 29, 1910, in Bedminster, Pa. He was a graduate of Bluffton (Ohio) College and received a bachelor of divinity degree at Chicago Theological Seminary and master's and doctoral degrees in sociology at the University of Chicago. He received honorary doctorates from the University of Waterloo (1989) and Bluffton College (1987).

He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Marguerite Geiger Fretz (2002), his son, Burton D. Fretz (2001), and a granddaughter, Amy Kristine Fretz (1989).

Anabaptist reconciliation conference in April

Thirty years ago, Geri Keller, a State Reformed Church pastor in Baretswil, Switzerland, was asked repeatedly by Anabaptist visitors how to find the nearby "Anabaptist cave" in Wappenswil. He then explored the history of these Anabaptists and discovered that they used the mountain cave to flee cruel and violent persecution inflicted by his own State Reformed Church.

In Switzerland in May 2003 and June 2004, and in Montana in January 2004, groups of Amish, Mennonites and Swiss Reformed leaders gathered to be reconciled. Each gathering included acts of forgiveness and healing, reconciliation and restoration.

Now Swiss Reformed leaders will travel to Southeastern Pennsylvania, where Anabaptists first settled in North America as they fled persecution in Europe. An Anabaptist Reconciliation and Healing Conference will be held April 7-9 at Petra Christian Fellowship in New Holland, Pa. For registration information visit www.anabaptistreconciliation.org or call 717-898-6602.*—Mary J. Buch*

IN BRIEF

Goshen students speak about peace

Gangs in Honduras, Darfur and community nutrition were among the topics of speeches during Goshen (Ind.) College's 2005 C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest. Five Goshen students took part in the college's near-century-old tradition of conversation and action about peace and justice issues Jan. 18. Participants included junior Dominique Burgunder-Johnson of Vilseck, Germany, and Beavercreek, Ohio; First-year Krista Ehst of Bally, Pa.; sophomore Dawit Kebede of Goshen; junior Elizabeth Miller of Danvers, Ill., and junior Josh Weaver of Bluffton, Ohio. Pat McFarlane, associate professor of communication, is coordinator of the event. *—Goshen College News Service*

Mohammed now a popular name

The name Mohammed has entered the top 20 names for boys in Britain and Wales for the first time, a reflection of the growing strength and size of Britain's Muslim community. Mohammed and Charlie bumped Adam and Alfie out of the top 20 list of baby names for 2004; in 2003, Mohammed was 22nd.*—National Catholic Reporter*

Mennonite an invitation to enter the story

Mennonite schools encourage distinctive friendships for sharing and sharpening faith values.
—Pat Hershberger

Students from other backgrounds often say that Mennonite education is a communal experience.
—Ervin Stutzman

education

Interviews with five Mennonite Church USA leaders

by Gloria Y. Diener

Mennonite education seeks to open a door that invites students to enter a distinctive story of faith and become part of the history of God. Mennonite education encourages students to pick up the thread that runs through the biblical story, to follow its path through Anabaptist history and weave it into their own spirits as they continue the Anabaptist story and extend the faith community for the future.

I asked five Mennonite Church USA leaders to reflect on their stories of Mennonite education. Deanna Custar, pastor of Salem Mennonite Church in Waldron, Mich., and a member of the Hesston College Board of Overseers; Ervin Stutzman, dean of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., and past moderator of Mennonite Church USA; Jorge Vallejos, director of Convention Planning for Mennonite Church USA, based in Elkhart, Ind.; Linda Shelly, regional director for Latin America with Mennonite Mission Network in Newton, Kan.; and Patricia Hershberger, who lives in Woodburn, Ore., and is a member of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board and former moderator of Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, share their thoughts.

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When I discovered that I could tell the biblical story, I was given courage to move forward in leadership.
—Deanna Custar

The emphases on community and putting faith into action are important in Mennonite education.
—Linda Shelly

Continued from page 9

What has been your experience with Mennonite education?

Dee: I was in my mid-40s when I finally accepted the call to pastoral ministry. I graduated from the Hesston (Kan.) College Pastoral Ministries Program in 1998 and earned a Master of Divinity from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., in May 2004. Mennonite education has been a longtime family value, and I'm hoping to pass it on. I've already begun buying Hesston sweatshirts for my grandchildren.

Ervin: My first experience with Mennonite education, at Rosedale Bible Institute, Irwin, Ohio, changed the rest of my life. I was introduced to Anabaptist history and encouraged to attend college; I eventually earned a doctorate from Temple University and began teaching at Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS), Harrisonburg, Va., in 1992. Bonita and I chose Mennonite education for our three children so they would be rooted in our faith heritage by belief and through associations and friendships.

Jorge: I was married during my freshman year at the University of Alberta and became the father of a beautiful daughter one year later. I then decided to defer education to provide for my family. Several years later I felt a strong call to serve God and the church, and my wife and I spent a lot of time praying for guidance. Tim Burkholder, former Northwest Conference administrator, suggested I attend Goshen (Ind.) College, and the conference helped us financially—a huge answer to our prayers. I graduated from Goshen with a bachelor's degree in Hispanic ministries and business and am completing an MBA through Purdue University.

Linda: I knew in high school that I wanted to attend a Mennonite college because of the shared values, relationships between students and faculty, and the peace position. I graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in 1978. A pivotal experience during college came when the campus pastor suggested I take a four-month assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in Guatemala. Later, after serving in Latin America for six years, I attended AMBS, receiving a master's degree in peace studies in 1989.

Pat: I made a fairly impulsive decision to attend Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., for my senior year following Brunk revivals. Something profound touched my life during my year at Western, and I grew aware that I wanted to use my life in service for the church. More recently I took spiritual direction classes at EMS and found them invaluable.

In what ways did your Mennonite education experience prepare you for the servant leadership you have provided Mennonite Church USA?

Dee: At Hesston, I began to understand that the Bible is not just an old-time story; a thread runs through the entire Bible, and I am part of the story. This realization empowered me in ways I can't describe—it opened doors, and I started on a journey that continued at AMBS. When I discovered that I could tell the biblical story, I was given courage to move forward in leadership.

Ervin: EMS strives to help students understand their future roles as servant leaders. For example, I recently gave an exam to the students in my preaching class on which they were asked to answer five questions about preaching from a potential search committee. EMS emphasizes practical knowledge and encourages students to understand how real congregations think.

Jorge: Though I didn't want to take Mennonite history, I enjoyed that class most of all and received a good understanding of how early Anabaptists evolved in their understanding of faith, community, mission and peace. I saw my own experiences reflected in the attitudes of early Anabaptists.

Linda: The AMBS faculty was interested in my work with Salvadoran refugees through the

I received a good understanding of how early Anabaptists evolved in their understanding of faith, community, mission and peace.
—Jorge Vallejos

Honduran Mennonite Church and Mennonite Central Committee; they encouraged me to write reflective papers rather than focus primarily on library resources. This reinforced for me the importance of each person's story.

Pat: Our primary textbook in one Bible class was called *Missions*, and the accompanying text was *Gospel Herald*. We were expected to be knowledgeable about the church. Students interacted with church leaders on a daily basis because many also taught at Western.

What makes Mennonite education distinctive?

Dee: The personal relationships I established at Hesston and AMBS provided a safety net and level of trust that allowed me to welcome challenges and uncertainties and facilitated growth and learning.

Ervin: Students from other backgrounds often say that Mennonite education is a communal experience. Many have expressed high regard for the way professors and students emphasize cooperation rather than competition in student life and in classes, possibly the single most important skill needed by leaders.

Jorge: Goshen was demanding academically, and professors expected students to take responsibility for their studies, but the difference I immediately sensed was that professors wanted their students to succeed. This was a breath of fresh air.

Linda: The emphases on community and putting faith into action are important in Mennonite education. At AMBS a group of students formed a "Xerox club" to give each other access to information—that's just one example of noncompetitive learning that prepares students to be church as they look out for each other.

Pat: Mennonite schools encourage distinctive friendships for sharing and sharpening faith values. Students also learn leadership as they plan worship and prayer times, Bible studies and service projects.

What does Mennonite education mean to the future of Mennonite Church USA?

Dee: It's vital. The church needs leaders who have been educated to improve mind along with spirit and soul. As the world grows increasingly fragmented, future church leaders need to understand the importance of the integration of all life; for example, science and theology need to join hands.

Ervin: Mennonite education will continue to play a crucial role in shaping the identity of the church, but we must not get the idea that only folks who are trained in Mennonite institutions can lead Mennonite Church USA. Vibrant Mennonite communities of faith and great potential leaders abound in places where only a few have studied in Mennonite education.

Jorge: Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite schools need each other. Together they shape the minds of future church leaders. Schools must continue to offer rigorous, disciplined courses of study that challenge students to think through their faith heritage; the church must continue to remind scholars that we are all on a faith journey together and need each other.

Linda: We must not assume that all education needs to take place in Mennonite schools, but students who spend formative years in the nurturing context of a Mennonite school are encouraged to become the leaders we need for the future.

Pat: The new Explore program at AMBS provides scholarships for Mennonite youth to visit the campus for a service/study program during the summer. The initiative is an example of cooperation between church and school on the effort to provide leadership for the future.

Mennonite Education Agency wants to hear your story of Mennonite education. Send your notes to info@MennoniteEducation.org or 63846 County Road 35, Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621. TM

Gloria Diener is a member of Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg Va.

Serve one another

Faith development in academics, for vocation

by Anna Groff

As I walked nervously down the aisle toward the front of the chapel, catching the eyes of my peers who sat in the benches around me, I contemplated a retreat to the seat I had just vacated. But I gathered myself, sat down on the lone chair up front and removed my socks and shoes. I looked up, and then-president Shirley H. Showalter gave me a reassuring smile before she knelt to wash my feet.

When I decided to attend Goshen (Ind.) College, I never imagined the college president would wash my feet—an act of such service. That memory will remain with me a long time. I was up there because I as an individual student symbolized the way Shirley said she hoped to serve all the students at Goshen in her leadership role.

In her chapel speech that followed, she encouraged students to serve one another and serve the broader world. Her message challenged me to take a new, more careful look at my faith and how I could use the gifts God gave me to serve others. I decided to form a concrete plan.

Creating this plan daunted me, especially because college can feel like a selfish time of thinking mainly about myself and my studies. Amid this world of independence, which sometimes seems like self-centeredness, Goshen College provides me with tangible ways to use my gifts to serve others and think creatively about what I want to do beyond college. I no longer limit my definition of service to mission trips or working overseas. I hear Christ's call to contribute my specific gifts to the communities around me.

Truth-teller: In high school at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School, I was asked to reflect on my hopes and dreams in a chapel at the end of my senior year. I decided to share about my dream of working in journalism, along with the fear I had of getting caught up in a world of bias and distortion. I wanted to be a truth-teller and someone who advocated for the people ignored in our society.

I experienced this concretely in the Mennonite Women of Color class I took at Goshen my sophomore year when our class made a video focused on the life and faith of Mennonite women of color. Hearing their stories of struggle wasn't always easy, but I felt honored and sometimes unworthy to hear from these women who experienced things I will never fully know. I also felt a strong bond with them through the Mennonite church. We may worship in different ways and have different experiences, but our faiths are based on similar relationships with Christ. This connection allowed for comfortable fellowship and discussions with these women before and after the formal interviews.

Not only did these interviews connect the class to the broader church but it allowed us to help give voice to these women who are often denied a voice. In class we talked about looking beyond the obvious when choosing whom to feature in a news story. Most often, people in power, those with influence or money, are given attention in the media, while people who contribute to their community in more subtle ways are overlooked in news coverage. I was reminded of Christ's example to show public support for those ignored by society. I feel challenged to write about people and things that mainline media often disregard.

In my communication classes, we discuss ways to bring about justice in the media. My professor and mentor, Duane Stoltzfus, regularly encourages us to write to media and express our frustrations. He taught us about the profound positive and negative effects the media have on our society.

Conversations: These types of conversations in the classroom carry over to intense discussions with my housemates in the kitchen of my small group house or at a table in the dining hall. The division between classroom talk and out-of-the-classroom talk blur when my peers openly share about the topics in their history, communication and Bible courses. I hear them ask important questions about their faith that challenge and encourage the others in the discussion.

Conversations inside the classroom also merge outside the classroom with professors. Duane's faith inspires me, as I saw firsthand in the classroom his passion for telling the truth and bringing to light the injustices in the world, for caring about the least among us, as Christ commanded. I also experienced his warmth, generosity and hospitality outside the classroom when he invited the staff of the school newspaper over for a holiday Sunday brunch at his house with his family.

Amid this world of independence, which sometimes seems like self-centeredness, Goshen College provides me with tangible ways to use my gifts to serve others.

Toward the end of my first year, I learned another way to serve those around me through communication when I signed up for the course Religious Journalism. During that class we discussed current issues in the Mennonite church, such as the merger and what words such as "missional" mean. All this study prepared us for our work on the daily newspaper *mPress* at the 2003 Mennonite convention in Atlanta.

Mennonite conventions weren't new to me, but being there as part of the newspaper staff was. At past conventions I read the daily newspapers, and I felt eager to be part of the project. I learned how the newspaper allows a church body to unite and find strength in their community. Church media allow people from all over the country and world to feel connected. Even those at the convention too young to read the articles paged through the paper looking for photos of people from their congregations. When I wrote an article for *mPress* on youth groups' T-shirts, I was reminded of the value of support from my youth group as a high schooler at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I am halfway through my third year of college, and my peers and the faculty at Goshen continue to affirm and encourage my faith-based values and how I want to carry them out. Though I don't know what my future will involve, I trust God has a plan. I hope to wash the feet of others by giving a voice to the voiceless and providing a way to bring connections in a church community. TM

Anna Groff is a junior at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Something

On saying goodbye to college children

by Dawn Yoder Graber

There's something not quite natural about leaving your child at college. As a parent I know and believe the rhetoric I've been told about letting go, but why doesn't my heart keep up with what my mind believes?

My husband and I said goodbye to our boys today, a senior and a freshman in college. We left them in Indiana and have begun the 22-hour transition of time alone in an empty white van as we travel back to our family home in Florida. We travel without much conversation, and I have a headache—a result of that discrepancy between the feeling that a mama bear doesn't just leave her cubs unattended and the rationale that a good mother eagle knows when it's time to push the eaglet out of the nest and leave it alone.

We are used to our boys' adventures taking them away from us. We've raised them to believe that going away from home is the healthiest, the most fun and the way to learn life's lessons most intensely. In recent months, one son lived in the Dominican Republic and the other in Hawaii. In fact, with encouraging our family of six to experience many opportunities, we only lived together half the available weeks between when college closed in May and began in August. **So why does my heart continue to hurt year after year as I experience my family changing?** It seems like we had six around the breakfast table forever, and now only four of us remain to eat together.

We who have raised our children to be self-sufficient members of the family team suddenly find ourselves over orientation parents weekend doing all the things we did for them when they were 8. We parents revert, not the kids. We have an urge to be important in their lives and helpful one last time. We become so willing to do anything over these last two days we're officially with them that it becomes comical.

What? You need something else from WalMart? Sure, Dad'll run there for the third time today. You're hungry? You don't want to break from your excellent designer dorm detailing to go fellowship with your parents in a restaurant? No problem, we'll run to the fast-food store of your choice and buy you food we said days earlier was unhealthy. What? Your comforter and towels were packed away by you dirty last spring and left

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FRAGILE

not quite right

in a musty attic? We'll wash them on the spot, even though you've done your own laundry at home since sixth grade. I volunteer and you accept my offer of hanging clothes neatly in your closet, even though I haven't done that for you at home since you were a toddler. We walk up four flights of stairs over and over again, moving your stuff from storage to your new campus housing. I smile remembering how many times you've asked Dad or me to come see something on the computer at home. We've too often pleaded the impossibility of motivating our bodies to move from the recliner or bed to share in your discovery. **Now it seems we're willing to climb mountains for you.**

We're overly considerate, wanting to be with our kids at all the required meetings and fun events of college orientation but not wanting to plop down beside them if they want to sit with other students. With other parents we hesitate upon entering places over orientation weekend. We let our child lead, willing to be ditched and relegated to the "parents without students section," if that's their wish. We don't want our kid to be a mommy's boy and insecurely pull us aside to sit with him, but we hope for that perfect blend of them leading new friends to a seating section as they also say casually, "Hey, come on, Mom and Dad, you guys come sit here, too," and meaning it.

Today you kids had us in your pockets. Why didn't you take advantage of us? Our hearts made us sitting ducks.

You did sneak the request of $500 on the bottom of your Wal-Mart list for a futon, and that simply elicited a laugh but no action. Did you get why moms were crying during the talent show last night? It was because the little 2-year-old following his mom the emcee around the stage reminded all of us of how you big college kids were once that age.

Today the radio news reported a mom from Illinois working toward breast-feeding rights in public in her state. Guess why that made me cry? I remembered how I was privileged to nurse you for over a year, and now you're an adult?

But being the kids you are, you hold my hand during the final parent send-off blessing and unashamedly squeeze and hold us tight as we part, obeying the program's direction that says, "Parents say goodbye" at noon.

The truth is, We are excited for you and your life ahead. Your lives involve roommates and upcoming fights over who cleans up the kitchen. You will hope friends wait for you to walk to the cafeteria and you'll have a love-hate relationship with the stimulation and pressure of learning and deadlines. You'll experience the spark of romances begun and the treasure of intimate friendships. We don't want you to suffer. We fear for moments of loneliness and hope you call home for more than money. We pray for wisdom of good choices for you.

Our minds know that you are exactly where we always dreamed you would be, away from us in a supportive learning environment with great profs and friends. Our hearts are a step behind, but we know that's just self-centeredness talking, wanting to keep the beauty of you for ourselves instead of sharing you with the world. I'm trying to be a mother eagle, not a mama bear. And boys, we will look forward to hearing about your adventures when it works out again for there to be six around our breakfast table. TM

Dawn Yoder Graber lives in Sarasota, Fla.

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Mennonite Educational Agency school locations

The mission of Mennonite Education Agency is to strengthen the life, witness and identity of Mennonite Church USA through education. MEA links schools with the church and its missional vision—nurturing servant leaders for families, communities and churches throughout the United States and beyond.

Faculty Calling Project: Helps Mennonite educational institutions locate faculty prospects.

Fund for Peoplehood Education: Provides grants in support of projects to strengthen church-school relationships.

Investment Committee: Manages long-term investment funds for some educational institutions of Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite University Faculty Conference: Biennial gathering of new and experienced faculty members to consider the ideals that undergird Mennonite higher education.

Racial-Ethnic Leadership Education programs: Hispanic Education in Theology and Leadership (with Iglesia Menonita Hispana and Goshen College), Lark Leadership Scholarship program (with African American Mennonite Association and Eastern Mennonite University), and Native Education and Training program (with Ministries of Native Congregations and Hesston College).

Youth Census: Collects and makes available to Mennonite groups demographic and contact information about Mennonite students of all ages in the United States, to promote access to church programs and activities.

Mennonite
Education
Agency

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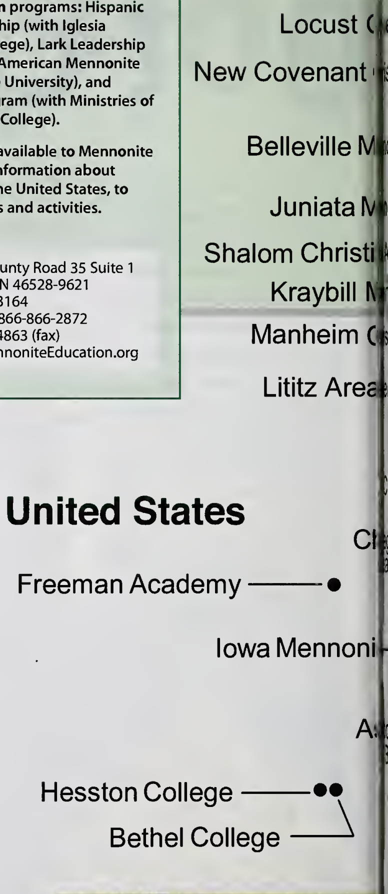
Toll-free: 866-866-2872
574-642-4863 (fax)
info@MennoniteEducation.org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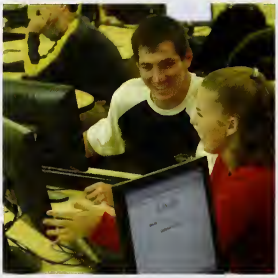
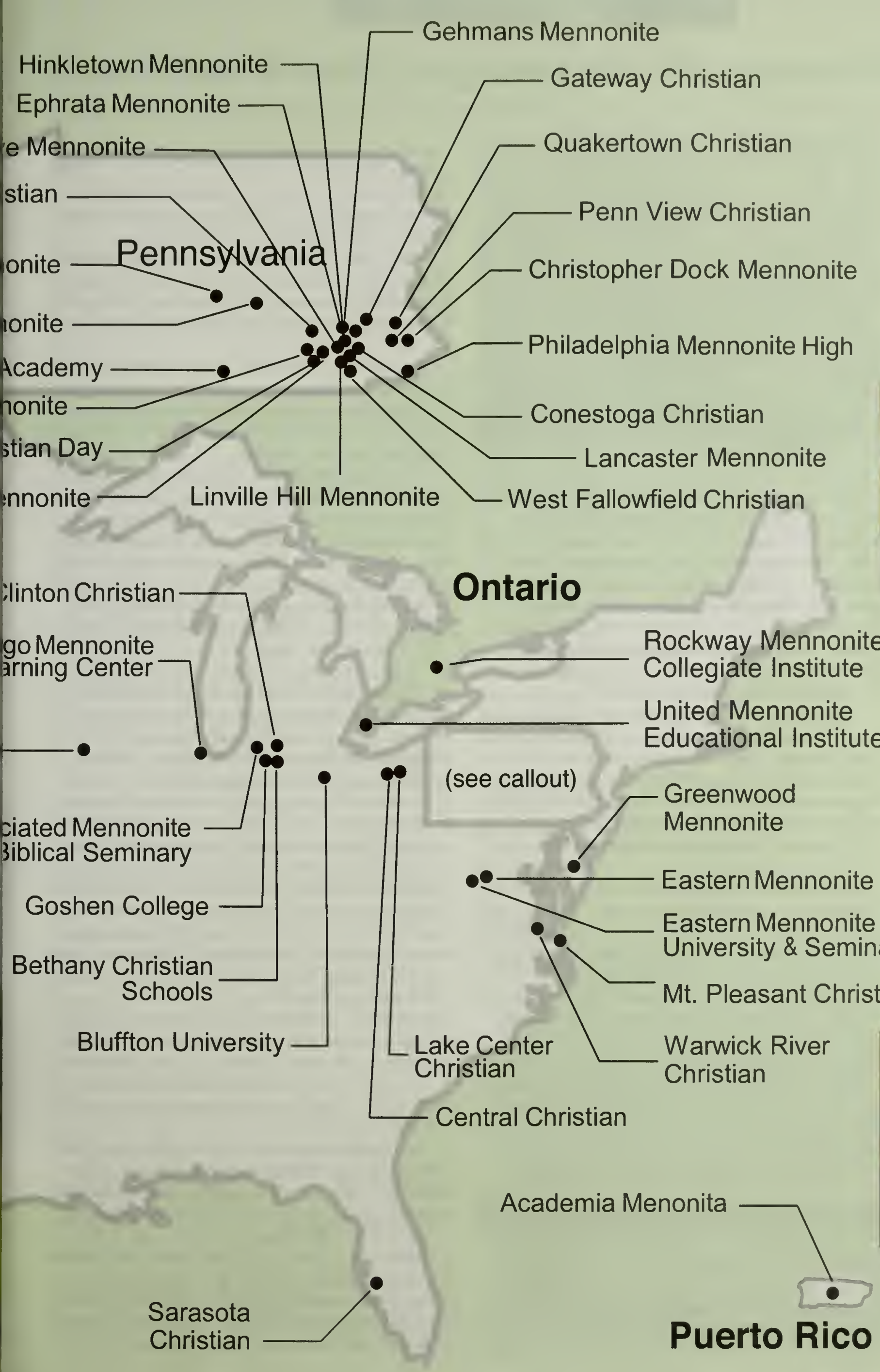
Eastern Mennonite Seminary



Bluffton University

Eastern Mennonite University

Above: Bethany Christian Middle School
Right: Bethany Christian High School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Christian
Warwick River
Christian
Central Christian
Academia Menonita
Sarasota
Christian
Puerto Rico

Gehmans Mennonite School

Sarasota Christian School

Sharing God's gift

Carlos Romero is executive director of Mennonite Education Agency.

A while back I asked some young adults, "What do you want Mennonite schools to be?" Here are some of their responses: "I want a place where I connect with God." "I want a place that helps me find meaning in my life and share this with others." "I want a place where I can grow, that helps me break down the stereotypes I have and that challenges me."

Mennonite Education Agency is one organizational part of Mennonite Church USA, along with congregations, area conferences, program agencies and more. My prayer for our schools, colleges, universities and seminaries mirrors my prayer for the church as a whole.

Several years ago, Doug Reichenbach, a former Bluffton (Ohio) University trustee and then the father of a high school student, stated his hopes for what a church college could offer his son: "One thing I expect is inspiration. I expect that if my son goes to a Mennonite school he will be able to breathe in, take a deep breath of, the Holy Spirit, to breathe in a sense of acceptance, to breathe in a sense of the church and the faith. To take a deep breath and feel he is loved and cared for.

"The second thing I expect is an opportunity for him to express his imagination. … I want my son to find a place at a Mennonite school where his images can be released. Whatever those images are—verbal, artistic or some other kind of creativity. Someplace where his imagination can let go.

"The third thing I expect is that he will experience some relationship like he has not experienced before. I expect the church school to provide opportunities for community for him. To share himself, to be in a personal relationship with faculty. To be in a relationship with friends, people from other cultures and all kinds of relationships.

"Fourth, I expect him to experience identification on two fronts. I know our son needs to leave our household to find himself. … But more than that I know my son, who has just made a commitment to Jesus, needs to understand about whose he is, the Lord to whom he belongs. I expect him to experience that kind of identity but also identification with Christ and Christ's church, particularly the Anabaptist-Mennonite expression of the church" (from *Teaching to Transform: Mennonite Perspectives on Higher Education*, edited by Keith Graber Miller, Pinchpenny Press, 2000).

Like Doug, I also hope our schools can be places of Holy Spirit inspiration, the expression of intellect and imagination, community and identification with Christ and the part of Christ's church that is Mennonite Church USA.

I hope these transforming experiences are open to Mennonite students, to other Christians and to non-Christians in whom the seed of this faith perspective may someday grow into their own relationship with God.

Our schools need to be places where by relating and communicating with God we are able to discern God's will for our life. To grow in faith, we need to be challenged. Sometimes we need places where we can ask hard questions about our faith and try sincerely to understand what God is calling us to be. I want my children, Elise and Cristian, to be able to ask their questions within the context of a church school that cares.

The goal of academic excellence is not antithetical to the missional purpose of our Mennonite schools. It is a gift to the church that Mennonite schools are strong academically. Mennonite schools build the church by developing leaders intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Students find community in our schools, as do faculty and teachers, administrators and other staff. I see the teachers and other leaders of our educational institutions coming together to serve the whole church. Mennonite Education Agency facilitates "affinity groups" of college presidents, academic deans, student life deans, development leaders, campus pastors and others for fellowship, sharing and envisioning the future. The energy of these relationships is life-giving.

Mennonite education has undergone a paradigm shift from protecting our children and our denomination to being light to the world, to sharing our faith within the context of our Anabaptist understandings of what it means to have accepted the call of Christ in our lives.

I am excited about the future of Mennonite education. We have brought together different traditions, histories and cultures, both institutional and denominational. And we have felt God's presence as we build relationships and trust.

Mennonite Education Agency invites you to keep our schools in your prayers, and to engage their people in conversation and mutual discernment as we work together to strengthen the church through education, and to share God's greatest gift. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Gospel passion**—Laurie L. Oswald
- **Who speaks for God?**—Don Blosser

Executive Board prepares for '05 Assembly

MHS Alliance now has accountability relationship with Mennonite Church USA.

How the church should speak to the U.S. government and governance relationships within Mennonite Church USA were the issues before the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board during its meeting in Tampa, Fla., Jan. 13-15.

The board also formalized relationships with Mennonite Health Services Alliance by adopting a covenant negotiated over the past year. The organization will be "something less than an agency" of Mennonite Church USA, said Mennonite Church USA executive director James Schrag.

One issue confronting the board was what to do with the Healthcare Access Resolution (see page 30). Although delegates at Atlanta 2003 approved the creation of such a resolution, several board members questioned the steps they had taken.

"We did not prepare the church on how we speak to government," said board member Jim Harder, "and picked an issue [health-care access]. Maybe we need a threshold of near unanimity before we go forward."

Some 50 congregations reviewed the document. Nearly two-thirds supported it, but some expressed discomfort with the resolution's tone.

"I'm not sure it says what the delegates were asking for in Atlanta," said board member Sue Miller. "They were not asking for the negativity [about the current U.S. health-care system]."

A slightly revised version will be presented to Charlotte 2005 delegates; they will decide whether they want to vote on the resolution.

Dismantling racism: The biennial review of Mennonite Education Agency turned quickly to problems with Racial Ethnic Leadership Education, a fund separate from MEA's budget but administered by the agency. MEA board chair Rosalind Andreas described reasons for the fund's demise: In the formation of Mennonite Church USA it lost 30 percent of its funding because Canadian Mennonites no longer contribute to the fund; in the former Mennonite Church there were "established networks" that supported the fund; there was no mechanism established in the current Firstfruits Funding System for RELE.

But the discussion of funding racial-ethnic leadership education broadened to include the way Mennonite schools serve people of color.

"Our church institutions are set up and structured for the ethnic Mennonite church," said MEA board member Jesus Cruz. "The challenge is to get ... the church beyond the population we are currently serving."

Issues of racism emerged in another matter before the Executive Board. Last summer Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) Assembly adopted a resolution stating it "perceives broad manifestations of racism that yet exist in Mennonite Church USA and its service agencies."

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Education Agency board member Ed Diller addresses the Executive Board during the MEA review. Other MEA board members (right to left): Jim Rosenburger, Rosalind Andreas and Jesus Cruz (partially hidden). At front left is Executive Board member Kevin Goertzen.

In response, the board's antiracism team described groundwork it is laying for a questionnaire about racism in the church and its plans for addressing the issue with delegates at Charlotte 2005. However, neither the questionnaire results nor other details were released.

Health and human services: After several years of negotiations, the board approved a "covenant" document for Mennonite Health Service Alliance (see "Health, Service Agencies Form Alliance," April 20, 2004). The document provides a formal connection to Mennonite Church USA for 75 health and human service agencies and institutions that are members of the new organization. According to MHS Alliance president Rick Stiffney, approximately 85 percent of those who work in those agencies or serve on their boards are members of Mennonite Church USA.—*Everett J. Thomas*

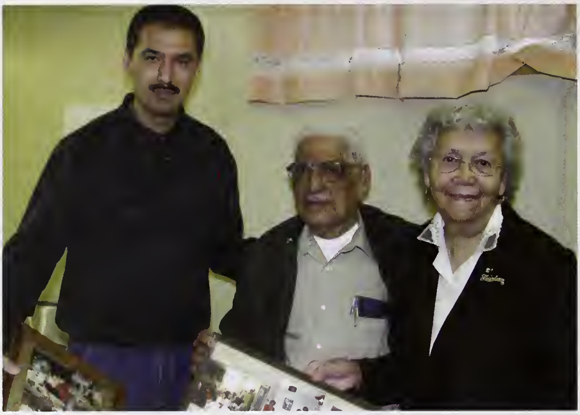
Summary of meeting

During its Jan. 13-15 meeting, Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board discussed and/or took action on the following:

- **Reviewed a revised version of the Healthcare Access Resolution, which may be the only resolution before delegates at Charlotte 2005.**
- **Conducted a biennial review of Mennonite Education Agency, with attention to the declining financial support for the Racial Ethnic Leadership Education (RELE) fund.**
- **Responded to a resolution from the 2004 Iglesia Menonita Hispana (Hispanic Mennonite Church) Assembly that asked for formal dialogue on dismantling racism in Mennonite institutions.**
- **Approved a covenant with Mennonite Health Services Alliance that provides accountability for that organization to Mennonite Church USA.**
- **Considered bylaw changes for Mennonite Church USA that will: (1) formalize the Governance Council (annual meeting of representatives of Executive Board and the four churchwide agencies) and (2) include a provision for "other entities" such as *The Mennonite* and MHS Alliance.**
- **In its customary "meeting with owners," the board gathered at College Hill Mennonite Church and heard leaders from Southeast Mennonite Conference report on life in their congregations.—*Everett J. Thomas***

Congregation returns to Mennonite fold

First Spanish-speaking Mennonite church in Iowa is training a new pastor.



Laurie L. Oswald

Casa de Oracion Emanuel leaders (left to right): pastor Fernando Ramos and elders Gregorio and Juanita Diaz

When Fernando Ramos retired after working for 25 years in a supermarket warehouse, he didn't rest from his labors. Instead he became a co-laborer with God as pastor of his childhood church, now called Casa de Oracion Emanuel. The congregation is in Davenport, Iowa.

But not only did Ramos return to his spiritual roots after spending years in other Mennonite and nondenominational churches. He also helped Casa de Oracion—begun in 1963 as the first Spanish-speaking Mennonite congregation in Iowa—return to its roots. The congregation left Iowa-Nebraska Mennonite Conference (now part of Central Plains Mennonite Conference) in 1999.

Not only has this congregation come back to Mennonite Church USA, but it is also living out the priority of developing leaders. —Tim Detweiler

But that gap began to close after Casa de Oracion invited Ramos to become its pastor in 2001. Ramos and the congregation's elders sought new relationships with conference leaders such as conference minister Tim Detweiler. Following a series of meetings with Detweiler, the congregation joined Central Plains Mennonite Conference in June 2004.

Ramos and longtime elders Juanita and Gregorio Diaz are now grateful to be home.

Widely affirmed for his pastoral gifts but without formal training, Ramos sought guidance from conference leaders and invited the Diaz couple and others to do the same.

"Growing up, I saw how important it was for our congregation to have covering and accountability," says Ramos. "Even though there were some struggles in relating to the conference, this church has always felt itself to be Mennonite, because of the emphasis on the Word of God and certain doctrines."

Detweiler feels joy in the congregation's return. He is touched by how the congregation pushed through its difficulties rather than retreat.

"They had drifted away from the Mennonites," Detweiler says, "but in that drifting, they began to recognize who they were as a people and what their identity was in terms of theological understandings. It's truly a story about a congregation coming home."

Juanita Diaz believes the former positive ties with the conference drew her congregation back by the power of love. She cites the congregation's relationship with their sister church, Kalona (Iowa) Mennonite Church, as one example.

"They always demonstrated great love toward us," she says. "The church often hosted us and invited us to cook our Mexican food. ... They've always been supportive and at Christmas-time sent cookies and gifts for our children. ... That's the kind of love that always brings people back."

After coming to Davenport from San Antonio in 1963, Gregorio became a small restaurant owner. Juanita prayed for 20 years for her husband to become a Christian, and he accepted the Lord in 1986, when the late Mac Bustos was pastor.

"Even though I was always a part of the church, I didn't have God in my heart," Gregorio Diaz says. "I found out that life without God doesn't work, because when God was not in my heart, I was in darkness. ... But God has his time, and when he calls you, you must come to him."

As elders in the congregation, the Diaz couple was involved in calling Fernando Ramos as pastor.

"I believe Fernando is meant for us," Gregorio says, "and those pastors God intends for us will stay with us in a committed way. We've seen him as a boy, and now he is a man and our pastor."

In the midst of pastoral transitions, the small congregation didn't realize how much its nurturing of its own as pastor affirms Mennonite Church USA's priority on leadership development, Detweiler says.

"Not only has this congregation come back to Mennonite Church USA, but it is also living out the priority of developing leaders," he says. "For a time the congregation had a pastor who did not share the Mennonite ethos and they discovered the value of calling someone who is a part of their story and a part of our history.

"As a conference, we also want to help nurture Fernando. We'll be working with him on receiving some Anabaptist training, and he is soon to begin the licensing process."

"Just as Jesus came to his own people first," says Ramos, "that is what I feel God is calling me to do. I want to depend on God and to walk by faith into our unknown future."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Building project tithe to eastern China

Park View Mennonite Church helps isolated Chinese congregation get building.

Courtesy photo

Ervie Glick (left) listens while Shi Chufen reads the letter from Park View Mennonite Church to the small group of believers at Anren, Sichuan Basin, China.

When spending $2.2 million on its addition 10 years ago, Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., resolved to "tithe" the cost of expansion by funding a capital project in some developing country where churches are struggling.

Now, thanks to a $6,000 "capital tithe" from Park View, a fledgling congregation deep in the rugged mountains on the eastern edge of the Sichuan Basin, China, can move out of a rented garage and worship in a new church.

Helping fund a new building for the 300-member Anren congregation is the latest project for Park View, which also is assisting Mennonite churches in Thailand, Tanzania, Paraguay, Trinidad, Jamaica, two Christian schools in Ethiopia and a seminary in Guatemala.

When the Park View tithe was delivered, some 80 members from the Anren church attended the weekday event. Ervie Glick, retired linguistics professor from Eastern Mennonite University, and Jeanette Regier Hanson, a China Educational Exchange worker based in nearby Nanchong, read a letter written by Park View pastor Phil Kniss and presented the money for their new church.

"I unfurled the banner that Doris Bomberger had made and explained its symbolism," says Glick. "In Chinese characters it read, 'Together in Christ.' I then presented the money—which Jeanette had wrapped in red paper, as is customary in China for such events—and read the letter from Park View that Wu Wei had translated into Chinese."

After an impromptu sermon by Hanson, they sang several hymns, including "In Christ There Is No East or West."

"After closing, each person came by and clasped our hands, exclaiming how God had touched their individual lives and thanking us," Glick reported later to Park View. "I know no Chinese (or their local dialect), but their tears and enthusiasm spoke volumes to me."

Glick's dream is to have a delegation from Park View visit Anren again in two or three years, keeping up the contact that has begun with his visit.

Prior to Glick's presentation, two representatives of the Dazhou region's religious affairs bureau stopped by to check things out.

"They wanted to be assured that we were not among those 'cult' types that bring trouble to isolated regions," Glick says. "I think they went away satisfied."

According to Glick, the villagers knew nothing of Christianity and the Bible some 20 years ago. But thanks to a migrant worker bringing a Bible back from the Fujian province in the 1980s, some family members became Christians. They met together and copied portions of their one treasured Bible.

Among them was a young woman named Shi Chufen, who became a Christian in 1992. She then began serving as a leader among the growing group of believers while supporting herself as a tailor. Because the number of believers grew so large, local government officials were instrumental in connecting them with the church in nearby Dazhou City.

Communication was difficult, however, because the believers in Anren speak their own dialect. Pastor Duan encouraged Shi Chufen to pastor the new church full time.

In obedience to this call, Shi and her Christian husband moved off their farm and into town, where they bought a house and a garage for her husband's business.

The group began meeting in a rented garage nearby, growing to 300 members and attracting up to 1,000 people for special occasions. But local officials said the rented garage was inadequate and was a threat to public safety. They are requiring them to have a meeting place to continue worshiping. The officials helped them by offering a piece of land at a substantial discount.

Because the area is remote and mountainous, the people are poor and have little cash income from their subsistence farming of raising sweet potatoes, various green vegetables and pommelos.

Church officials in the provincial capital have made this a priority capital project, calling for outside help to build the church.

The brick-and-concrete church will be built with all volunteer labor by the believers and should accommodate about 400 people when completed this year.—*Dick Benner*

Each person came by and clasped our hands, exclaiming how God had touched their individual lives and thanking us. I know no Chinese … but their tears and enthusiasm spoke volumes to me.
—Ervie Glick

Traumatized tsunami victims get help

Mennonite Central Committee counselors to Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka

As Mennonite Central Committee workers report on the ongoing psychological trauma suffered by survivors of the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami, MCC is preparing to train trauma counselors in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka.

MCC will send three experienced trauma counselors to affected areas to train groups of local people to attend to the psychological needs of tsunami survivors.

Karl and Evelyn Bartsch of State College, Pa., will go to the devastated Indonesian province of Aceh. The Bartsches, who each have clinical counseling practices, served terms with MCC in South Korea and South Africa, where they trained counselors to work with victims of Apartheid-era violence. A manual they wrote in South Africa on trauma counseling training in cross-cultural settings has been translated into several languages.

Carolyn Heggen of Corvallis, Ore., is a psychotherapist who recently served a term with MCC in Nepal, training school teachers and trauma counselors to work with victims of war. Heggen will train trauma counselors for two months in India and Sri Lanka.

Additionally, an MCC partner organization, West Bengal Volunteer Health Association, is doing health assessments and trauma counseling on India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. MCC is supporting the project with $11,000.

Assessment teams are continuing to work in Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia, where MCC is responding with more than $3.5 million in relief and recovery work in areas affected by the tsunami. MCC Indonesia co-representatives Dan and Jeanne Jantzi reported from a Jan. 6 visit to the devastated Aceh province that the loss of life has overwhelmed the ability of communities to mourn the dead.

"Most people we talked to in the camps are just numb," the Jantzis wrote in an email. "They sit without any energy to rebuild or do anything."

Mary Oxley, MCC worker in Sri Lanka, reported that some survivors are already meeting to discuss trauma counseling.

"Some of the features of this particular trauma are the huge number of bodies that will never be found, making the grieving process for individuals much more protracted," she says.

Evelyn Bartsch says that although the scale of this disaster is overwhelming, healing can begin with the simple act of sharing one's experience with someone who cares.

"To listen to the story ... that is universal," she says.—*Tim Shenk of MCC News Service*

Asunta in Sudan

Asunta Maker, 17 months old, sits on her mother's lap at a clinic in Gebelaulia camp in northern Sudan, where she and more than 30 other children are benefitting from an emergency nutrition program. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) supports eight clinics in the area where an estimated 1.8 million people have been forced to relocate because of Sudan's decades-old civil war. They live in desert camps or other makeshift settlements.

In Gebelaulia, a camp of 83,000, many of the children playing in open areas have the gold-tinged hair that signals malnourishment. The clinic that MCC helps fund includes an emergency nutrition program for young children. Working with the Sudan Council of Churches, MCC donated $54,000 in 2004 to support four such clinics in camps on the outskirts of Khartoum and four others elsewhere in northern Sudan.
—MCC News Service

John Robinson/MCC

Messianic Jews and Palestinians together

Mennonite Mission Network workers help welcome all believers into the fold.

Mennonite Mission Network

Leaders in the Israeli church periodically gather in the desert for worship, fellowship and listening for God's voice. At a recent gathering, they invited Palestinians to join them.

Moses, Elijah and Jacob—prophets and patriarchs of the Israelites—heard God's voice in some of the remotest, harshest sections of the Holy Land: the deserts.

For several years, a group of leaders in the contemporary Messianic Jewish movement has aimed to listen to God's word in a similar place, periodically gathering for retreats in the Negev desert not far from Beersheba.

Not all of them necessarily wanted company, especially from Palestinians.

When a few of the desert disciples suggested they invite local Palestinian pastors to their retreats, others initially objected. Eventually all were won over to the cause, though some maintained reservations.

The group invited a handful of Palestinian pastors several months ago. There, around the evening campfire, one of the Palestinians described how he came to faith.

Yacoub* described growing up in and out of jails in the old city of Jerusalem. His activities against the controlling Jewish powers kept him in trouble; he had been imprisoned seven times by the time he was a young adult and developed a full well of hatred for the controllers he considered his enemies.

Jesus changed his perspective. After he accepted Christ, Yacoub lost his hatred for the Jewish people. He welcomed the invitation to the desert with Messianic Jewish leaders.

With a few simple words that evening around the campfire, Yacoub's story of the impact of Jesus on his life sent the gospel across racial and national lines and encircling both Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

These leaders, who would normally have found it difficult to include those of the other side within the boundaries of the family of God, were profoundly changed by Yacoub's testimony. Many of those who had resisted inviting the Palestinian pastors extended the right hand of fellowship to these Palestinian pastors and welcomed them into their circle.

The retreats began several years ago with a small group of Israeli messianic congregational leaders who gathered to discuss the needs of the body of the Messiah in Israel. Suddenly one pastor, who lives near the desert in Beersheba, recalled Luke 10:42, where Jesus says, "There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

"That is what we need to do," he told the others. "In the midst of all our busy schedules we need to draw aside and meet together and sit at the feet of Jesus."

> In the midst of all our busy schedules we need to draw aside and meet together and sit at the feet of Jesus.—Messianic leader

The group agreed and chose the desert for their purposes. The gatherings are informal. Meetings usually start late. Everyone takes the opportunity to look each other in the eye, exchange a few slaps on the back or a hug or two and smile at each other.

At the crack of dawn, each participant finds a personal place in the desert and waits for God's voice during the day before returning to the campfire in the evening to share faith stories.

Since they first entered Israel in 1953, Mennonite workers have walked alongside emerging Messianic Jewish congregations, supporting local programs instead of starting new organizations.

"We believe our presence here can be most effective when we seek to serve alongside others," says a long-serving Mennonite Missions Network appointee in Israel, "to give a testimony in word and deed that the kingdom of God transcends political and religious divisions. In so doing, we can truly express the servanthood of Jesus that welcomes all believers into the fold."

Mennonite Mission Network personnel have served in Israel continuously since 1953 through a predecessor agency. Associates walk with Palestinian Christian and Messianic Jewish institutions and fellowships, seeking to express God's message of reconciliation to all sides: Arab Christians, messianic believers, Jews, Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

**Editor's note: Names have been changed and identities kept anonymous because of security concerns for workers in the region.*

Correction: The advertisement for Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary's summer term on page 23 of the Jan. 18 issue was incorrect. AMBS' ad on page 29 of this issue lists the correct information. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by this mistake.

Military draft possibility sparks planning

The Conference will also consider how to promote volunteerism among youth.

Representing the Brethren in Christ Church ... there is a growing desire to revitalize our peace position.
—Darrell Winger

Leaders from Anabaptist denominations are working with Mennonite Central Committee MCC U.S. to plan a March 4-5 consultation that will address contingency planning in case of a U.S. military draft.

Santiago

Peachey

The consultation will also address how to respond to an increase in military recruitment efforts and how to promote a culture of volunteerism among youth.

A planning group for the consultation, which will be hosted at the General Offices of the Church of the Brethren in Elgin, Ill., includes representatives from Mennonite Church USA, Brethren in Christ Church of North America, U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, Church of the Brethren, MCC U.S. and the Council of Moderators and Secretaries (COMS), an Anabaptist group of denominational leaders.

Invited participants include denominational leaders, Anabaptist youth and representatives from agencies and educational institutions.

The consultation will include education on selective service requirements, updates on recruiting efforts and wider-ranging conversations about alternatives to military service, says MCC U.S. executive director Rolando Santiago, who cowrote the consultation proposal with MCC peace educator Titus Peachey.

The idea comes in a time of war—sparked in part by heightened military recruitment efforts and rumors of a military draft. Yet to Darrell Winger, General Secretary of the Brethren in Christ Church of North America and chairperson of COMS, the event offers denominations a chance to refocus on a bedrock of Anabaptist theology.

"We need to work more diligently at telling our story and telling why we believe, from Scripture, that Christ followers follow a peaceful path," Winger says. "Representing the BIC Church, we realize there is a growing desire to revitalize our peace position and our communication effort on this topic. This is an opportunity to help us proclaim the peace position, not just respond to war."

Santiago says he and Peachey wanted to emphasize planning across denominations for alternative service and increased education about options other than the military. The proposal notes that the option of joining the military is often most attractive in economically depressed communities, especially communities of color.

"Military recruitment messages emphasize generous education benefits, job training and the development of leadership skills as incentives for enlistment, resulting in a virtual draft of those with few other opportunities," Peachey says.

Participants will also talk about how to increase an ethic of volunteerism.

"Whether in times of peace or times of war, our faith compels us to serve," Santiago says. "We need to be prepared to love our fellow human beings, to love our enemies."

The consultation will also highlight questions about how to inspire a commitment to a life of serving others and of peace among young people in Anabaptist denominations and how to offer viable options for meaningful work, learning and service among youth who feel trapped by poverty and racism.—*MCC News Service*

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Sannich Community Church is seeking a Pastor of Discipleship Ministry to enhance and extend the ministry led by the current Pastor. A primary focus of this new position will be to strengthen the church in **small group**, **equipping**, and **caring** ministries.

Surrounded by vast natural beauty, SCC has been sent to live out God's mission in a challenging, West Coast, urban environment. We seek someone with creative ideas about the church and a willingness to lead through the context of relationships.

Details of the position, the church and application procedure are posted at www.saanichcommunity.ca. The deadline for applications is February 20th, 2005. But, SCC will continue the search until filled.

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COMMUNITY CHURCH
MENNONITE BRETHREN

Vietnamese Mennonites appeal sentences

Lawyer: Mennonite leaders are "victims of a regime that oppresses religion."

Appeals for Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang and Pham Ngoc Thach, two of the imprisoned Mennonite church leaders in Vietnam, will be heard on Feb. 2. At their Nov. 12, 2004, trial, Thach and Quang were sentenced to two and three years in prison, respectively, on charges relating to resisting officers of the law doing their duty.

A Vietnamese lawyer, who asked to remain anonymous, says that Quang and his fellow workers are not criminals guilty of the charges brought against them but victims of a regime that oppresses religion and other human rights.

In a telephone conversation on Jan. 15, a Mennonite leader urged the international faith community to contact the government and the court on behalf of Quang and Thach before Feb. 2 requesting that the hearings be open and that members of the church be permitted to attend. An appeal for Nguyen Van Phuong, sentenced to 12 months, has been denied.

Concern for the welfare of Ms. Le Thi Hong Lien remains high; she was also sentenced on Nov. 12, 2004, to one year in prison. Reports indicate she has been beaten and is suffering from total mental collapse. Her parents were denied access for visits on Jan. 4 and 11. They believe authorities fear they will report their daughter's mistreatment.

International appeals on behalf of Lien to receive medical treatment and then be released should be sent immediately, addressed to His Excellency Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, Hoang Hoa Tham, Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam; fax: (84) 4-8234137, 8231872. Telegrams may be addressed to the attention of Prime Minister Phan Van Khai.

Appeals on behalf of Quang and Thach should be sent immediately to the prime minister (as above) as well as to the court, addressed to Mr. Uong Chu Luu, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, 25A Cat Linh St., Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam; tel: (84) 4-8231138, 8231142; fax: (84) 4-8431431.

Writers should send copies of all messages to the Vietnamese ambassador within the writer's country.

Amnesty International is also calling attention to these cases (see page 6).—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference News Service*

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CALENDAR

Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference, April 2-9, **Petra Christian Fellowship**, New Holland, Pa. For registration and/or information, write: Anabaptist Reconciliation, P.O. Box 2243, Lancaster, PA 17608-2243 or visit our Web site: www.anabaptistreconcilitiation.org or call 717-898-6602.

Lancaster Mennonite School, *kindergarten open house*, Feb. 2 and 3 at Locust Grove campus, Feb. 3 at New Danville campus, 9-11:30 a.m.

Lancaster Mennonite School, *kindergarten samplers*. Locust Grove campus March 1, April 5, May 5, May 26. New Danville campus March 2, April 6, May 4. Times are all 9-11 a.m.

Lancaster Mennonite School, *open house*, Feb. 7 at four locations from 6-8:30 p.m. Locations are Lancaster Mennonite High School, Lancaster Mennonite Middle School, LMS-New Danville, and Locust Grove. $100 discount at all locations for students who register by Feb. 18 for 2005-2006 school year. For more information contact Eliza Ayers-Booth at 717-299-0436.

WORKERS

Lanctot, Nina Bartelt, ended Jan. 9 as pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Troyer, John L., retired Dec. 31 as pastor at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Engadine, Mich.

Wiebe-Powell, Laura, was licensed for chaplain ministry Jan. 2 at Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Blum, Preston Chase, Dec. 30, to Timothy and Susan Nice Blum, Souderton, Pa.

Cavanaugh, Alexander Mark, Dec. 1, to Stephen and Monica Cavanaugh, Baltimore, Md.

Dane, Paige Olivia, Jan. 9, to Matt and Lana Huebert Dane, Hastings, Neb.

Diller, Colton Jacob, Dec. 28, to Phil and Kristie Pankratz Diller, Hesston, Kan.

Emery, Amber Nikole, Jan. 10, to Neil and Jami Sellars Emery, Sellersville, Pa.

Fretz-Corlis, Clara Sofia, Nov. 15, to Tim Corlis and Sara Fretz, Kitchener, Ont.

King, Kaycee Agnes, Dec. 20, to Matthew and Melissa E. Buckwalter King, Christiana, Pa.

Luitjens, Mattias Jonathan, Dec. 24, to Nathan and Rachelle Patmore Luitjens, Wayland, Iowa.

Mininger, Delaney Ryan, Nov. 15, to Nolan and Vanessa Unruh Mininger, Greeley, Colo.

Peters-Unrau, Lucas Jem, Nov. 4, to Kevin and Kara Peters Unrau, Kitchener, Ont.

Schrock, David William, Dec. 25, to Michael and Sue Schrock, Baltimore, Md.

Troup, Noah Michael, Dec. 18, to Michael and Connie Johnson Troup, Goshen, Ind.

Troyer, Amanda FuHong, Sept. 28, to John and Sheila Wagler Troyer, Sturgis, Mich.

MARRIAGES

Eby/Haarer: Alyssa Joy Eby, Harrisonburg, Va., and Jason Haarer, Harrisonburg, Dec. 18 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Geckle/Long: Michael Geckle, Belleville, Pa., and Faith Long, Lewistown, Pa., Aug. 28 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Graber/Nussbaum: Kevin Graber, Wheaton, Ill., and Katrina Nussbaum, Orrville, Ohio, Nov. 6 at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

DEATHS

Correction: Alma C. Clemmer's funeral was at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Homes, not Souderton Mennonite Church as listed in the Jan. 4 issue.

Arner, Loretta Krabill, 89, Massiollon, Ohio, died Dec. 27. Spouse: James Arner. Parents: Aaron and Mary Schmucker Krabill. Children: Stanley R., Mary Ellen Greek, Daryl (deceased); seven grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Beachy, Perry J., 78, Hesston, Kan., died Jan. 3. Spouse: Eleanor Niemela Beachy. Parents: Jacob L. and Anna Yoder Beachy. Child: Jonathan. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Brenneman, Eva Wideman, 94, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 29. Spouse: Titus M. Brenneman (deceased). Parents: William and Sarah Brubacher Wideman. Children: Derald, Bea Brenneman Ruebke, Ervin, Fred, Robert; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Cameron, Anna Shantz, died Nov. 29 of a stroke. Spouse: Ewan Cameron (deceased). Parents: Allan Bowman Shantz and Catherine Shirk Shantz. Children: Margaret, Roy, Hugh, Clare. Funeral: Dec. 3 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Crilow, Melvin, 90, Wakarusa, Ind., died Dec. 18 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Irma Blosser Crilow. Parents: William and Mary Snell Crilow. Children: Shirley Albrecht, Ernest, Dorothy Schreck, Larry; 10 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 21 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Derstine, Mark D., 58, Perkasie, Pa., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Linda Bishop Derstine. Parents: Howard and Anna Clymer Derstine. Children: Christopher, Jeffery, Michael; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 11 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

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Enns, Edgar J., 67, Altona, Man., died Dec. 28. Spouse: Norma Enns. Parents: Frank and Mary Fehr Enns. Children: James, Brian; five grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 1 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Friesen, Helen Beier, 87, Henderson, Neb., died Dec. 31. Spouse: Rudolph J. Friesen (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Agnes Ratzlaff Beier. Children: Raymond, Jerry: five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 4 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Gehman, Esther B., 88, Sellersville, Pa., died Jan. 4. Spouse: LeRoy L. Gehman (deceased). Parents: Levi and Lizzie Brunner Hackman. Children: Robert, Ray, Kenneth, LeRoy, Charles, Gladys Kolb, Miriam Halteman, Esther Bergey, Kathryn Martin, Marilyn Moses, Marie Jones; 39 grandchildren; 95 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Goossen, Mary Wiens, 76, Beatrice, Neb., died Dec. 21. Spouse: Henry W. and Anna Enns Wiens. Children: Micheal, Robert, Andrew; five grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 30 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Hartman, Ruby Newcomer, 81, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 24. Spouse: Ira Hartman. Parents: John and Pearl Maust Newcomer. Children: Loren, Terry, Kevin, Kathy Stoltzfus; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Heinrichs, Susan, 85, Altona, Man., died Dec. 20. Spouse: Jacob A. Heinrichs (deceased). Parents: John and Aganetha Harder Friesen. Children: Joan Giesbrecht, Elaine Dyck, Roy, Carol Sawatzky, Wayne; 13 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 23 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Hoffman, Mary Kuhns, 99, Pigeon, Mich., died Jan. 6. Spouse: John Hoffman (deceased). Parents: Henry and Maggie Ernst Kuhns. Children: Helen Ruby, Ethel Gunden, Alice Albrecht; 12 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Kauffman, Mae E. Smoker, 88, Ephrata, Pa., died Dec. 24 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Samuel S. Kauffman. Parents: Joseph Z. and Rachel Lapp Smoker. Children: Glenn, Joseph, Elvin, Esther Bare, Rose White; 13 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Kauffman, Ralph C., 94, Freeman, S.D., died Nov. 15. Spouse: (1st) Marion Lorenz (deceased), (2nd) Dorothy Dick-Preheim Kauffman. Parents: Charles J. and Fannie Schrag Kauffman. Children: Bonnie Hemry, Edward. Funeral: Jan. 1 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Klassen, Walter, 72, Kitchener, Ont., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Judy Wilson Klassen. Parents: John and Almeda Klassen. Funeral: Nov. 30 at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Kurtz, Susie H., 90, Princess Anne, Md., died Dec. 4. Spouse: John M. Kurtz. Parents: George Milton and Mary Smucker Hostetler. Children: Eugene, Donald, Calvin, Douglas; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 8 at Holly Grove, Westover, Md.

Lambright, Carl, 49, Elkhart, Ind., died Dec. 31 of a heart attack. Spouse: Brenda Helmuth. Parents: C. Stanley Lambright and Lula Jean Kirkpatrick. Children: Angela, Kathy, Joshua. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

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GOSHEN
COLLEGE

Loewen, Velma J., 51, Normal, Ill., died Jan. 10. Parents: Harry and Verna Schroeder. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Mennonite Church of Normal.

Miller, S. Paul, 88, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 22. Spouse: Vesta A. Nofziger (deceased). Parents: J. Ami and Lydia Miller. Children: Eleanor, Elaine Haines, James; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Nachtigal, Frank E., 93, Inman, Kan., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Ruth D. Stucky Nachtigal (deceased). Parents: Henry P. and Mary Ediger Nachtigal. Child: Shirley J. Butz; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 11 at Buhler (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Neufeld, Edwin Eugene, 73, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 26. Spouse: Marjorie Banman Neufeld. Parents: Frank and Mary Fehdrau Neufeld. Children: Ron, Jan Lehman, Martha Penner, Patty Sprunger; 13 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Jan. 1 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Ruby, Manuel, 97, Waterloo, Ont., died Oct. 22. Spouse: Mabel Lutzi Ruby (deceased). Parents: John and Barbara Baechler Ruby. Children: Audrey Kropf, Ken, Jean Voll; 11 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 25 at Edward R. Good Funeral Home Chapel, Waterloo.

Schlabach, Loyd Edwin, 88, Greenwood, Del., died Nov. 9. Spouse: (1st) Edna E. Zook Schlabach (deceased), (2nd) F. Josephine Schlabach. Parents: Lorenzo and Polly Miller Schlabach. Children: Jay E., Allen E.; stepchildren Clifford D. Baker, Daryl E. Baker, Berta K. Kauffman, Carla J. Yoder; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Greenwood Mennonite School.

Schmidt, Melvin E., 79, Tallahassee, Fla., died Dec. 6. Spouse: Wanda Schmidt. Parents: Louis and Lodie Schmidt. Child: one son; two grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 11 at Fairview Cemetary, Greensburg, Kan.

Schrock, Harvey S., 80, Lancaster, Pa., died Dec. 12. Spouse: Edith Amstutz Schrock. Parents: Simon and Sadie Yoder Schrock. Children: Jon H., Carol Jordan, Marlin, Linda Brown; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 17 at New Danville Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Shank, Beulah I., 91, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 11. Parents: Clarence and Maggie Shank. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Wenger, Roy Emerson, 96, Missoula, Mont., died Nov. 30. Spouse: (1st) Florence Heineman (deceased), (2nd) Lillian Hoff Wenger. Parents: Joseph and Emma Gerig Wenger. Child: Susan Duffy; step-child Wendy Misevic; two grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 6 at University Congregational Church, Missoula.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

Brethren Retirement Community in Greenville, Ohio, seeks ***president/CEO***. BRC, a CCRC facility, serves 450 residents in independent living (now expanding at a satellite site), residential, assisted-living and nursing care including a specialized dementia-care unit. The CEO will play a pivotal role in guiding BRC through its current five-year strategic planning and assisting the board in long-range planning. An NHA is required.

Contact Ralph McFadden, 352 Shiloh Ct., Elgin, IL 60120; phone 847-622-1677; email llikermac@aol.com.

The **Vineland United Mennonite Church** is accepting applications for the full-time position of ***assistant minister*** to begin in June. We are a congregation of 350 members situated in a growing rural community.

Our church seeks an enthusiastic individual with a strong desire to nurture youth spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Primary responsibilities include leadership of the youth program, with an emphasis on relationship building. This individual will also support the young adult and children's programs. Candidates should have formal training in theology/religious studies and possess a commitment to the values and visions of the Anabaptist Mennonite church.

Please direct inquiries and resumés to Vineland United Mennonite Church, c/o Dave Gossen, 4563 Cedarbrook Lane, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B5; phone 905-563-6482; email dgossen@sympatico.ca.

Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 through G8, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire this summer. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News, VA 23602; or LJShowalter@aol.com.

"Farming with Values That Last 2005: Growers and Eaters in Communion," Feb. 25-27, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center,** Mount Pleasant, Pa.

Sustainable farming conference for those led by their Christian faith to grow, market and share food for all God's people. Workshops, worship, posters from farms and ministries, commercial exhibits, music, storytelling. Dan Guenthner and Margaret Pennings, Eric and Ann Nordell, Don Kretschmann, Roy Brubaker. Contact Cheryl Paulovich, Cheryl@laurelville.org, 800-839-1021, www.laurelville.org.

Sunnyside Village of Sarasota, Fla., is seeking a ***director of finance*** for its not-for-profit retirement community. This experienced individual provides leadership on budget process and all matters pertaining to the accounting office. Senior living experience required; B.A. in finance and accounting necessary. Send resumé to Sunnyside Village, 5201 Bahia Vista Str., Sarasota, FL 34232 or fax 941-377-2571 Attn: Human Resource Director, Fern Eash.

Mennonite Mission Network has an immediate opening for a full-time ***stewardship counselor*** to encourage individuals to make financial contributions to Mennonite Mission Network through cash and deferred gifts. Candidates should bring a passion to connect with God's reconciling mission to the world and the ability and desire to relate to people. Ability and willingness to travel is a must. Ideally this person will work out of the Great Lakes office in Elkhart, Ind. The full position description is located on the Web at www.Mennonitemission.net. Interested people should send a letter of interest and resumé to Staff Recruitment, Mennonite Mission Network, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, or email staffrecruitment@Mennonitemission.net.

Hesston College seeks a full-time ***history instructor and history writer*** to begin August 2005. The position includes half-time teaching that could include courses in U.S. history and world civilizations and half-time writing the history of Hesston College. Candidates should have teaching experience, evidence of historical writing ability, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite Church and the mission of Hesston College. M.A. required, Ph.D. desired. Send a letter of application, resumé and reference list to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applicants began Jan. 24 and continues until the position is filled.

Hesston College seeks a full-time ***psychology instructor*** beginning August 2005. Qualifications: teaching experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite Church and the mission of Hesston College. M.A. required, doctorate desired. Please send a letter of application, resumé and reference list to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applicants began Jan. 24 and continues until the position is filled.

Hesston College seeks a ***resident director for women's residence hall*** (nine-month, full-time position) and a ***resident director for men's residence hall*** (nine-month, half-time position). As members of the Student Life Department team, each resident director will be a role model and mentor for students; select, train and supervise student staff and assist in enforcement of campus lifestyle standards. Qualifications include strong Christian faith, commitment to the Mennonite Church and to the mission of Hesston College, leadership ability, and listening and relational skills. Bachelor's degree or higher preferred. Minimum two-year commitment. Apply by resumé to Lamar Roth, Dean of Students, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062; email lamarr@hesston.edu or call 620-327-8234 for information. Review of applicants will begin March 1 and continue until positions are filled. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking qualified applicants for the full-time position of ***administrative assistant*** for the Africa department. This position requires understanding and respect for the spectrum of MCC connections, ability to work well under pressure and deadlines, ability to work in an open office environment, good organizational skills, competence in detail work and skill in office procedures and computer use.

As with all MCC personnel, this person also needs to be a Christian, active church member and committed to nonviolent peacemaking. Contact Prem Dick, psd@mcc.org, or Anna Reimer, awr@mcc.org, 717-859-1151.

President and CEO

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Reflecting on Faith in a Post-Christian Time by Daniel Liechty (Cascadia Publishing House, 2004, $19.95) proposes that facing death and drawing on Anabaptist thought gives spiritual pilgrims meaning and ethical guidance.

Border Crossing: A Spiritual Journey by Katie Funk Wiebe (Cascadia Publishing House, 2004, $14.95) is a revised edition of Wiebe's autobiography and commentary that became a popular book on aging. This new edition includes a new foreword and preface, revised original chapters and two new chapters about the death of Wiebe's daughter and more recent reflections on her experiences of being "old."

The Complete Tante Tina: Mennonite Blues and Recipes by David Waltner-Toews (Pandora Press, 2004, $17 Cdn.) is a collection of poems and recipes that concern Russian and Mennonite history, global politics, city girls and the celebration of Christmas.

Understand My Muslim People by Abraham Sarker (Barclay Press, 2004, $18) is by a devout Muslim who became a Christian. He shares his story, then offers a description of the history, beliefs and practices of Islam.

Development to a Different Drummer: Anabaptist/Mennonite Experiences and Perspectives by Richard A. Yoder, Calvin W. Redekop and Vernon E. Jantzi (Good Books, 2004, $8.95) collects stories and reflections from Mennonite development workers.

The Bible: A History by Stephen M. Miller and Robert V. Huber (Good Books, 2004, $29.95) covers topics such as the oral tradition, the use of papyrus, settling the Jewish Bible, first-century letter writing, selecting the New Testament, Jerome's Latin Bible, illuminating a manuscript, printing the Bible, the King James Version, modern biblical criticism, the Bible societies and the Bible in moving pictures. It is in a large format, illustrated, with full-color maps and charts.

God's Shalom Project by Bernhard Ott, translated by Timothy J. Geddert (Good Books, 2004, $7.95), sees God as a gracious parent, intent on a restored relationship with humans. "Shalom" includes harmony among humans and between humans and creation. It is the 2004 selection for Mennonite World Conference's Global Shelf of Literature.

This Teaching I Present: Fraktur from the Skippack and Salford Mennonite Meetinghouse Schools, 1747-1836 by Mary Jane Lederach Hershey (Good Books, 2004, $29.95) tells about these Mennonite-run schools, the unusual teachers who oversaw them and the artistic tradition they carried forward and passed on to their willing students. It includes full-color photos of more than 100 pieces of fraktur, with English translations of their German texts.

The Peanuts in My Life: A Book of Personal Meditations by Leanne Benner (Good Books, 2004, $8.99) offers comfort and commiseration. Benner encourages grasping hold of faith and moving forward, shored up by daily Scripture readings she suggests.

The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding by Lisa Schirch (Good Books, 2004, $4.95) sets forth paths to a more peaceful world but recognizes the complexity and the effort this elusive ideal requires. It singles out four critical actions that must be undertaken if peace is to take root at any level: (1) waging conflict nonviolently, (2) reducing direct violence, (3) transforming relationships and (4) building capacity.

Eyes at the Window: A Novel by Evie Yoder Miller (Good Books, 2004, $11.95) examines a close-knit community of Amish pioneers over several decades before the Civil War. Beneath the surface but never quite forgotten is the unsolved murder of an Amish baby (based on a true incident).

Alternatives for Simple Living is offering rewards for sermons on the theme of "Justice and Simple Living" for a series called "Worship Alternatives." Entry guidelines are available from Alternatives, P.O. Box 340, Sergeant Bluff, IA 51054, 800-821-6153, Alternatives@SimpleLiving.org. Alternatives also offers a new 40-day guide and other resources for Lent and Easter 2005 from the same address.

Catching Light: Looking for God in the Movies by Roy M. Anker (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) examines 19 popular films, showing how they convey a range of perspectives on the human encounter with God. Among the films discussed are *The Godfather* trilogy, *Chinatown*, *Tender Mercies*, *The Mission*, *Babette's Feast*, *Star Wars*, *American Beauty* and *Three Colors: Blue*.

The Battle for Middle-Earth: Tolkien's Divine Design in *The Lord of the Rings* by Fleming Rutledge (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) is a commentary that illustrates and celebrates Tolkien's grand epic. It sees Tolkien's faith carried by the entire narrative and not just in isolated themes, characters, incidents or motifs. Rutledge shows how Tolkien works religious ideas into the story itself, just below the surface.

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Who is the Healthcare Access Commission?

Karl Sommers

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu or visit www.anabaptist-ethics.org.

There are 45 million people on the West Coast, including California, Oregon and Washington. The combined population of the five Midwestern states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin is 45 million. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 45 million is also the number of people without health insurance during 2003 (15.6 percent of the U.S. population), up from 43.6 million in 2002. Looking at those statistics from another angle, one out of every five working-age adults in the United States lacks health insurance.

Health-care costs are also soaring. Health-care prices are increasing at roughly three times the rate of inflation, and 40 years of cost containment measures have been ineffective. As prices increase, the number of those without insurance continues to grow. Should we as a church care about this issue?

The most common needs shared for prayer relate to the health and well-being of members and their families or neighbors.

At its inception in 2001, the Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics (ACHE) interviewed pastors across the country. The majority named access to health care as the top health-care ethics issue. At that time, various Mennonite institutions, including MHS Alliance, Mennonite Mutual Aid and Mennonite Central Committee, were expressing concerns about whether we as a church are carrying out our fundamental beliefs about health-care access. Moreover, many of us with health insurance find the health-care system difficult to understand or use and would benefit from help in becoming more faithful caretakers of our health.

Responding to these concerns, ACHE worked with the Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA to design a project: the health-care access initiative. Mennonite Church USA delegates to Atlanta 2003 approved this initiative, which is to deliver two things: a new resolution on health-care access and proposed models to help congregations deal with the problems of health-care access.

To facilitate this work, ACHE gathered a 19-member Healthcare Access Commission (HAC) that includes business professionals, church and lay leaders, educators and health-care providers. Last year, the Executive Board officially appointed this commission to oversee the access initiative.

HAC's guiding vision is more equitable access to appropriate health care for all Mennonite Church USA members and our neighbors. While this may sound grand, HAC does not expect to work miracles. It does expect to help the church make incremental gains in improving access to health care.

If your congregation is like mine, the most common needs shared for prayer relate to the health and well-being of members and their families or neighbors. HAC will provide congregations with practical suggestions related to health-care access that complement the spiritual and emotional support with which we are most familiar.

HAC is working on the following tasks to be done by the Charlotte assembly in July:

1. Develop a biblically grounded, compelling statement of conviction about access to health care and our responsibilities in helping to change the U.S. health-care system.
2. Collect stories of how diverse people of faith are doing imaginative, outside-the-box, health-care-access-related ministries. And collect stories of need that help us to better understand the issues of access faced by individuals, families, institutions and employers.
3. Complete a research project that assesses the problems of health-care access in 65 randomly selected congregations that mirror the diversity of all churches in Mennonite Church USA.
4. Develop a report on how our church-related health-care-provider ministries are impacted by the inadequacies of the U.S. health-care system.
5. Fund an ACHE-produced study and action guide on health-care access for use in Sunday school classes and small groups. This guide will discuss the biblical and historical foundations for our convictions about health care, the current challenges of access and practical suggestions for how congregations can engage these issues.
6. Develop a draft of suggestions illustrating what Mennonite Church USA and its congregations, agencies and related organizations can do. Prototypes of promising models likely will be tested beyond 2005 for specific recommendations to assembly delegates in 2007.

HAC members represent a wide range of expertise and experience. HAC is eager to stimulate discernment and collaboration to help the church live out its beliefs so that "God's healing and hope flow through us to the world."

Members of the Healthcare Access Commission are Howard Brenneman, James Gingerich, Mary Graber, Daniel Grimes, Timothy Jost, Joe Kotva, Ron Yoder, Alan Yordy, Allon Lefever, George Lehman, Marjorie Mendez, Phyllis Miller, Dan Nafziger, Rolando Santiago, Clare Schumm, Karl Sommers (chair), Rick Stiffney, Sharon Waltner, James Krabill.

If you have a story to share with the Commission regarding health-care access, please contact Mennonite Church USA, Healthcare Access Commission, 500 S. Main St., P. O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245.

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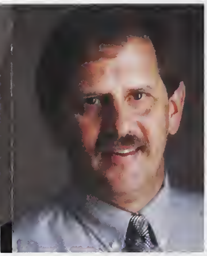

Everett J. Thomas

Homework for church schools

His parents were Catholic but no longer required him to join them at Mass by the time he was in junior high school. So he did not go to church at all. But the school he attended was sponsored by a small Mennonite congregation in a sprawling metropolis. With 450 students, the school dwarfed the 50-member urban congregation that sponsored it.

By the time he was in high school, this new Mennonite had become an outstanding student leader and was heavily involved as a member in the small Mennonite congregation. Now, decades later, Carlos Romero serves as executive director of the Mennonite Education Agency (see page 18).

"I am a product of the church's mission," Carlos has said on numerous occasions.

The experience at Summit Hills Mennonite School and its sponsoring congregation in San Juan, Puerto Rico, shaped a conviction in Carlos: Church schools are critically important for providing leadership for a missional church.

Carlos' story also illustrates at least three purposes for church schools:

- to help children—from our families and from others'—along the path of faithfulness,
- to enable students to integrate faith into the skills they learn and into their calling,
- to inspire identity with and loyalty to the Christian church in general and to the Mennonite church in particular.

The last of these purposes is seldom articulated by either the church or our schools. But as General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church identities fade, we need our church schools both to help shape our identity as Mennonite Church USA and instill a high view of our church among their students.

At times, some of our schools do not carry a high view of the church. Unfortunately, some students emerge from their experiences in church schools with less commitment to the church than when they began.

Where would we be as a denomination today if more of the students who attended a Mennonite school over the past 50 years left those experiences carrying positive identification with the church? Most of those graduates would now be in the church. Our schools would be even more highly regarded—and more heavily supported—by appreciative pastors, parents and congregations.

A church school is the third leg of a three-legged stool: family, congregation and classroom. Most understand well their responsibility for faith formation in individual students. We also need every church school to help these growing young people catch a vision for the church as one of the most important contexts within which to exercise their faith and contribute their gifts.

At Summit Hills, Carlos Romero made a commitment to Christ and fell in love with the church. Such results are an appropriate homework assignment for each church school: inspire similar commitments among students from Mennonite families, other Christian families or families with members who do not yet know Christ.—*ejt*

We need our church schools both to help shape our identity as Mennonite Church USA and instill a high view of the church in their students.

Farewell, Marla

Marla Cole joined *The Mennonite* as marketing director in 1998. Founding editor J. Lorne Peachey was creating a distribution system for this new Mennonite Church USA magazine within the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church. For seven years she researched the needs of the church through readers' surveys, developed subscription plans, marketed the magazine in our own pages and elsewhere—and daily lived with the pressure of maintaining circulation. She also, at times, reminded the editors about choices we made that would have repercussions with our readers.

"I've given it my best shot," Marla said as she announced her decision to end her work with us on Jan. 31. Her immediate plans are "to work full-time at the most important job of all," taking care of 6-year-old Will and 21-month-old Ali. However, Marla will provide some consulting services for *The Mennonite* until June 1.

Thanks, Marla. You have been a wonderful colleague. Our church has been blessed by your steady, behind-the-scenes contributions to this ministry we call a magazine.—*ejt and gh*

The Mennonite

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February 15, 2005

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gospel passion

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Aurora and Alberto Parchmont, cofounders of Potter House Mennonite Church in Houston, stand in front of the new church building they are renting for their growing congregation.

Race versus discipleship

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

In Jesus Christ we "become new persons … the old life is gone. A new life has begun!"—2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

This new life means God encompasses Christ's followers in his peace. This new life also challenges Christ's followers to establish peace with one another. Divisiveness is so customary outside Christ that we readily welcome peace with God while finding ourselves almost powerless to establish peace with one another.

Christ is the place of peace and rest for all those serious to follow him. However, the price of following Jesus in this world is self-denial. Disciples progressively find themselves called by the Spirit of God to renounce thinking and behavior opposed to life in Christ.

Race as an identity-forming concept of the world is a way of thinking that plagues disciples their entire lives. Race as a concept views people and nations in competition for survival and success. It views people of one complexion as superior to others. It fuels wars and genocide.

Children are raised with race-based views and motivations. Churches are organized through race-based thinking. Yet in Christ, race as a concept must yield to the peace of the kingdom, a peace the body of Jesus is to experience and model.

How odd it will be when disciples choose to live near one another across the world's lines of race! How strange it will be when disciples demonstrate mutual care within the same zip codes, in violation of the standards set by the notion of race!

Changing behavior can occur on the basis of what Jesus Christ commands, even while a disciple is not convinced of the correctness of Jesus' commands. Corporately we can shine a bright light simply by changing a few behaviors based on the notions of race.

A set of these behaviors has to aim at changing our minds. We are gripped by ideas that prevent us from experiencing the peace of God with one another. We Mennonites have yet to form peace-based models of life together that persistently undermine the false identity and power of race.

Models that affirm the need for disciples to struggle as if in labor are too rare in the church. This owes to our approach to disciple-making. Forming peace-based models of life together requires self-denial, means exposing the impact and the shape of race-ism in our midst. A commitment to shaping models has been eerily absent from many of our conversations about race. Much time in these conversations is given to debate over whether or not race is a problem in the church.

As long as there is no place and time for experimentation and action, academic approaches are not only welcome but well-attended. Academic approaches to discipleship do not lead to obedience, self-denial and corporate witness, so academic, classroom-based activities insufficiently beckon the average disciple to increased obedience to Jesus. Classroom-based activities may ask disciples to change their thinking and actions, but without experimentation and action steps, models cannot be formed.

Serious followers of Jesus experience tension when they decide to be controlled by the love of Christ. Should a disciple retain a notion of himself as of a race? How does such a notion fit within the call to follow Jesus? Disciples cannot deal with these tensions alone but need to share the struggle with other disciples. Otherwise, we will all become aspirants who remain imprisoned within the same patterns of behavior we were in when we first came to Christ.

In a church still bearing the impact of race while also organizing itself around the notions and power of race, can we really live the new life in Jesus we are called to embody? TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Fear of feeling

Re Martha Ann Burgard's piece ("A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite," Jan. 18): I, too, feel that many Mennonite churches are not stressing the foundations of what I have come to treasure about our denomination: living simply, pacifism and reaching out to one another on a local basis. I want to someday know my church family (and my immediate family) like I ache to know Jesus—not only on a surface level.

It pains me to see passionate Mennonites change churches or enter the global missionary field because they are lonely or burnt out at their home congregations. It pains me when I bring friends to church and they remark that their experience was less than welcoming.

It is a critical time for Anabaptists in the world; whether we know it or not, people are looking to our example for a way past a society of violence, isolation and corruption. But we cannot spread God's peace and love without first offering it to each other.*—Rebecca Rossiter, Seattle*

I was frustrated by "A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite" and am compelled to tell the other side. I grew up in the Mennonite church as well, but since moving to an area without a Mennonite church I have had the opportunity to attend a variety of denominations. The Mennonite church I attend when home is much more open than any other church I have been to. Some churches list prayer concerns, but no one stands up to put a face with the concern. In others, the pastor reads the concerns as just an item to attend to in the service. In still others, the concerns are relegated to a Sunday school class and never brought to the church body as a whole.

When the time comes for sharing in my home church, people willingly get up and share. They aren't simply stating facts; they are witnessing to the pain of a situation and rejoicing in the victories. People stand before the congregation and cry tears of sadness, express thoughts of frustration and joyfully relate an answer to prayer.

This type of openness can only come when people are willing to step out of their comfort zone and allow others to see them cry, bear witness to personal anger at life's unfairness and clap boldly when God has answered prayer. If an individual risks this, others will follow, and a community of support within the church will be built. But if an individual allows those around her to define or regulate what she does and does not share, she only becomes a part of what she criticizes.*—Erin Ediger, Ashland, Ohio*

I was saddened to read Martha Ann Burgard's article. I currently enjoy the blessing of a Mennonite congregation in which diverse feelings (joy, sadness, grief, frustration) are expressed during sharing time; hugs are common at the Communion table or in small groups, and no one is expected to be less than fully human. I pray that Martha, too, may find a congregation in which she can experience God's healing love through brothers and sisters.*—Martha Yoder Maust, Indianapolis*

I was saddened to read Martha Burgard's story. I certainly hope her experience is not typical of other Mennonite churches. All she wanted is what we all want when we hurt: someone to talk to, to listen, to hold us and pray with and for us. Reading her article reminded me of the admonition in James 2, "What good is it for someone to say they have faith if their actions do not prove it?" Love and compassion that is not communicated is neither love nor compassion.

It took a lot of courage for Burgard to write this article. It took a lot of courage for *The Mennonite* to publish it. I commend them both.*—Joyce M. Shutt, Fairfield, Pa.*

I was moved and saddened as I read Martha Ann Burgard's experience of "bombardment with the evils of sensuality." It seemed as if her article and Anne Stuckey's reflection in "Dreaming of Lavender Fields" (Grace and Truth) in the same issue spoke to each other.

I dare to dream that God's fearful children—that includes us Mennonites—will one day overcome fear of passion. I dream that we will come to appreciate and value our passions and live comfortably with them.*—Ruth E.H. Martin, Lancaster, Pa.*

I felt sad after reading "A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite." Over the years my wife and I have been through many difficult situations

IN THIS ISSUE

Beginning with this issue, *The Mennonite* is no longer designed by Merrill Miller from Mennonite Publishing Network in Scottdale, Pa. Merrill's talents took him away from us: MPN has asked him to coordinate the design of the new *Gather 'Round* Sunday school curriculum, and that assignment will claim the half-time he had for our design work. So we welcome Dee Birkey of Design Directions in Goshen, Ind., to design the cover of each issue and pages 8-17. Dee will also select the palette (the colors used throughout). Gordon Houser and Everett J. Thomas will design all other pages. However, we will continue to use the design grid and style Merrill created for us in 2002. Thanks, Merrill. We appreciate your talents and are glad the new curriculum is in your care.*—Editors* dealing with physical and emotional problems. I can honestly say when we have made these known to our church family we have been upheld with prayer and even hugs from our pastoral staff and other members of our church family.

My prayer is that we as a Mennonite family be Jesus to those who go through the storms of life and offer a hug of reassurance without the fear of sexual passion.—*Orlyn Lehman, Berne, Ind.*

Thanks to Martha Ann Burgard and her willingness to be transparent with all who read her article. She will no doubt be criticized again by some of your readers. It is helpful to hear the critique that while Mennonites generally have a reputation for being "loving, caring, compassionate people," this doesn't always translate to others being loved. In some ways our bark is better than our bite.

At the same time, it is time for the church to move beyond a "my needs" orientation in the church. The church is a community of redeemed-but-not-perfected-yet people. This kind of community requires a great deal of relational generosity. By generosity I mean the ability to accept that those around us can't be perfect in meeting our needs, just as we can't be perfect in meeting theirs. Our growth as Christ-followers is growth toward being like the one who does love perfectly, Jesus Christ.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Re "A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite" by Martha Ann Burgard: Please do not equate your personal experience with that of all Mennonite churches. When I read the part that all Mennonites "cannot acknowledge the person sitting next to us in church with tears running down her face," immediately a number of people from my own church came to mind. They are so compassionate that while you share about your bad day they will be crying for you before you even start.

There are many differences in individual churches. Please don't generalize your experience as fitting the Mennonite church as a whole.
—*Annali Smucker, Akron, Pa.*

Our Sunday school class uses the discussion guide provided by your Web site. The other week we read "A Fear of Feeling." While we were concerned for Burgard, we also realized that it is difficult for others to respond to deeply personal sharing in a way that is helpful to the person sharing.

Here are some questions we raised during our discussion: What is the whole story? How involved was Burgard with the church? Was this the church she grew up with or had she only "visited" when she needed to share? Was the "leader" that called her sharing inappropriate really a leader or was this person someone she perceived as a leader? How does this experience represent all Mennonite churches? Did *The Mennonite* check this story out with the church that Martha attended?—*Stage II Sunday School Class, Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.*

Christian Churches Together
I am writing to express my dismay and concern about the proposal Everett J. Thomas described in the Jan. 18 editorial, "Christian Churches Together."

Thomas writes about a new organization of Christian churches. I am all for churches working together, but now is not the time for Mennonite Church USA to join yet another larger organization. Thomas mentions how we already work with other churches. This is how it should be—not in a formal setting but in a fraternal relationship.

We are not yet adjusted to the merger that just took place. Franklin Mennonite Conference voted to join Mennonite Church USA, but the vote was not strong in favor of joining. Now many congregations are struggling to know if they should remain a part of Franklin Conference.

The merger of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church has created more splinters than we had before. My plea to Mennonite Church USA leaders and staff: Please do not put us through yet another time of struggle and decision.—*Lloyd W. Gingerich, Mercersburg, Pa.*

Thank you for the editorial on Christian churches together. John 17 means that Christians are to be one in spirit—that spirit being the Spirit of Christ. Ecumenism is both a requirement and a danger. Certainly, as we are to love one another even as God has loved us, it is a requirement. If viewed as a mix with the secular world, it is also a danger. The editorial described many ecumenical experiences, and they do represent the teachings of Christ. But the dangers of ecumenical experiences are present also. We cannot walk the way of righteousness and stray from it at the same time.—*Mary Ann Templeton, Castalia, Ohio*

At the speed of gods?
"When I drive I move at the speed of the gods," said Layton Friesen ("An Ode to Walking," Jan. 18). Who are "the gods," and how mobile are they? I don't know any "gods." Therefore, I have no point of reference for understanding Friesen's statement. By including this idolatrous comment in his article, Friesen's opportunity for positive influence was squandered, and the editor's responsibility was neglected. Driving is analogous to pornography?
—*Ruth Miller, Goshen, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

For the value received, the cost of education in Mennonite schools is:

○ About right (41%)
○ Too high (48%)
○ Too low (7%)
○ Not sure (5%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

IN BRIEF

Hesston College raises funds for tsunami victims

A check for $2,971 from Hesston (Kan.) College is headed to Indonesia to help victims of the Dec. 26, 2004, earthquake and tsunami. The money was collected from students, faculty and staff since early January. When classes resumed Jan. 11, students joined the fund drive. The 13 Indonesian students on campus, who live on the island of Java, which was not affected, organized a forum Jan. 14 and shared their reactions to the disaster, along with stories and photos of what was happening in their country. More campus efforts are planned to aid the tsunami victims, including skipping a meal in February and assembling Mennonite Central Committee relief kits in March.—*Hesston College*

Divorce rates

- Percent of Americans who have divorced: 35.
- Percent of married, born-again adults who divorced after they became Christians: 34.

—*Christianity Today*

Bethel College finalizes academic review

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Bethel College president E. LaVerne Epp and vice president for academic affairs John Sheriff on Feb. 1 announced the final results of Bethel's academic program review.

The program review team, comprised of four faculty members and three administrators, made its preliminary decisions public on Dec. 16, 2004, which led to protests by Bethel students. Bethel's faculty asked for more time to process the findings.

The team took comments from faculty, staff, students and constituents until Jan. 22.

Although most of the preliminary decisions remain, there were several changes announced. Majors and minors will continue to be offered in German and Spanish.

Global peace and justice studies will be redesigned as a minor in peace, justice and conflict studies linked to the Bible and religion department, for "strong connection and correlation with Bethel's Anabaptist heritage," Sheriff said.

Physics will continue to be offered as a major, with the program reshaped to have a stronger focus on pre-engineering and pre-medicine.

The instrumental music faculty position will remain. "The music program director will work with the review team to achieve efficiency and to develop a plan for better program visibility in the community," Sheriff said.—*Bethel College News Service*

Anabaptists Down Under celebrate 10 years

CANBERRA, Australia—The biannual conference of the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand (AAANZ) celebrated its 10th anniversary and drew 47 participants from around Australia and New Zealand. Guests included Glenn Kauffman, Eastern Mennonite Missions Asia director from Hong Kong; Jon Rudy, Mennonite Central Committee Asia peace resource director from the Philippines, and Christine Vertucci, an MCC volunteer in East Timor.

The gathering's theme was "Christianity and Violence," with Chris Marshall of New Zealand the main speaker. He gave three talks: "Terrorism, Religious Violence and Restorative Justice," "Religious Violence and the Peace of Christ" and "Atonement, Violence and the Will of God."

William Oates, who is Aboriginal, spoke about "being wise" when looking at violence in Australia. "Don't judge by appearances nor make a decision based on hearsay," he said. He called for partnership and mutuality over co-dependency. There is controversy in Australia over who is indigenous. Oates said, "If your heart calls a place home, you are indigenous. Your responsibility is then to be a custodian of the land."—*Mark S. Hurst*

Kevin Heinrichs

Prayer and reflection at Refreshing Winds 2005

A participant in a workshop called "Worship Through the Body, Worship as a Body" prays at Refreshing Winds 2005, a conference on worship and music held Jan. 20-22 at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. About 135 pastors, musicians and worship leaders from a variety of traditions attended.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Julian Weber

Mennonite farmer sparks mission

Beryl Forrester (left) visits Sheik Lamin Gibba in Pirang, The Gambia. A retired Mennonite farmer from Salem (Ore.) Mennonite Church, Forrester moved there at the invitation of a Muslim leader who had befriended him while he was working on the Youth With a Mission Mercy Ship Anastasis. New Holland (Pa.) Mennonite Church helps in the work. *—Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Praying through tear gas and pepper spray

WASHINGTON—With obscenity-yelling, flag-burning protesters behind him and tear-gas-spraying, riot-geared police in front of him, Justin Shenk, 21, of Akron, Pa., just wanted to make peace.

He knelt in front of an eight-foot black metal security fence with his back to the historic Willard Hotel on Jan. 20. He prayed silently as the motorcade of President George W. Bush passed by.

And then the police from behind the fence doused him with pepper spray. They tossed icy water and more pepper spray. Again and again.

Shenk, a student at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., continued to pray.

At times his head could not stay bowed as he lifted it, so friends poured water in his weeping eyes. Cameras whirred and clicked at him as he prayed.

Soon Shenk—who came to Washington as a peaceful protester but wore no protest buttons and carried no signs—was no longer alone. Others followed his lead, knelt three deep in a small strip of at least 30 supplicants.

Finally, after what Shenk figured was at least five tear-gas sprayings, begging friends pulled him away. Protester-medics swabbed his eyes. He spit up several times.

At first he could not speak; he could barely breathe. Then, as his friends dragged him away, Shenk described why he had prayed and stayed put. "It's important that we recognize each other's humanity. And neither side was doing that."

Did he feel brave for the assault? Shenk shook his head vigorously.

"I wasn't important at all," he said.—*Seth Borenstein, Philadelphia Inquirer*

Vietnam Mennonite Church asks for prayer

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—The Ho Chi Minh City's People's Court announced a delay in the appeal of Mennonite pastor Nguyen Hong Quang and associates, which had been set for Feb. 2.

Quang's wife was informed by his defending attorney Jan. 27; the court did not announce a new date.

Leaders of the Vietnam Mennonite Church had sent a request to all Christian communities to observe three days of fasting and prayer (Feb. 1-3). As VMC acting president, Mrs. Quang sent a letter Jan. 28 saying the church was continuing its plans to observe those days and called on all Christian communities to fast and pray for the church in Vietnam, specifically for VMC. They again called for special prayer for Ms. Le Thi Hong Lien, who is suffering severe mental illness.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Basketball prayer with the Leafs

The Goshen (Ind.) College women's basketball team pauses before a game to pray. There has long been prayer before games, but the women's team started a new program this year of inviting local clergy and faculty to "Pray With the Leafs" by leading a public prayer before the game.—*Goshen College*

Damascus Road to celebrate 10 years

AKRON, Pa.—Antiracists across the Damascus Road Network and others will gather March 11-13 in Atlanta to celebrate 10 years of antiracism organizing in our churches (Mennonite, Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Brethren, Episcopal, Presbyterian) and looking ahead to the next 10 years.

Speakers at the conference, "Damascus and Beyond: Seeking Clearer Sight, Bolder Spirit," will include Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, a professor of theology and ethics at Drew University who specializes in theology from a Latina perspective.

Workshop topics will include antiracism in congregations and working with youth. Participants will also be able to convene sessions about other topics and concerns they bring. Registration forms and information about the conference are available in English or Spanish online, www.mcc.org/damascusandbeyond, or by calling 717-859-1151, ext. 370. The conference is for newcomers interested in Damascus Road and antiracism work, as well as for those who have already attended trainings.—*Marla Pierson Lester, MCC*

Women in pants, baby snipers, Mennonites

GREENWOOD, Ind.—Roy Moore, the "Ten Commandments" judge from Alabama, spoke at the annual Unregistered Baptist Fellowship last October in Greenwood. But it was W.N. Otwell who stole the show, writes Susy Buchanan in the Winter 2004 issue of the Southern Poverty Law Center's *Intelligence Report.*

An ardent segregationist and militia supporter, Otwell heads God Said Ministries in Mount Enterprise, Texas. He began his opening-night remarks by berating the women in the audience who wore pants. He quoted Deuteronomy 22:5a: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man" (KJV).

Evangelist Don Boys spoke against gluttony, but Otwell opposed him. Thus women in pants, but not obesity, was added to "a list of unholies that includes the federal government, abortion providers, the American Civil Liberties Union, communists, 'sodomites,' baby snipers, smokers, trick-or-treaters, Mennonites, hip-hop, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, policewomen, John Kerry, R-rated movies, the Internal Revenue Service, Mormons and Satan."—*Intelligence Report*

IN BRIEF

Peter Wiebe to lead Central Christian School

Peter Wiebe, interim president at Hesston (Kan.) College, has been named head administrator at Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio, beginning this fall. Patrick Helmuth is serving as interim administrator through the 2004-05 school year. The Central Christian Board of Trustees has asked Wiebe to give pastoral and spiritual direction and administrative leadership to the school, to support and encourage faculty and staff, and to coordinate the work.—*Central Christian School*

CPT in Iraq trains Muslims

Christian Peacemaker Teams conducted a training Jan. 22-26 for Muslim peacemakers at the request of a human-rights organization in Karbala. CPT workers Peggy Gish, Cliff Kindy, Maxine Nash and Allan Slater conducted the participatory training at the organization's office. Some of the topics covered in the training included stories of nonviolent peacemaking, the power of nonviolence, the spirituality of nonviolence and planning for public action.—*CPT*

Communities Pursuing Christ's Purpose

SIXTH IN A SERIES

EVANGELISM

Gospel

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Hefty

Aurora and Alberto Parchmont, cofounders of Potter House Mennonite Church in Houston, stand in front of the new church building they are renting for their growing congregation.

passion

A Hispanic church plant in Houston spreads its evangelistic zeal to a Kansas congregation.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Alberto and Aurora Parchmont sell tamales to make a living. But they receive life in sharing bread from heaven at Iglesia Menonita Casa del Alfarero (Potter House Mennonite Church) in Houston.

In January 2004, the couple cofounded one of the many Hispanic Mennonite churches that have sprung up in mid-Texas as part of Western District Conference and South Central Conference, two of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences. And now Potter House is sharing its gift for evangelism with Tabor Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

Potter House and Tabor linked hands as sister churches last fall to support each other in pursuing Christ's purpose in their communities. About 20 members of Potter House plus Marco Guete—conference minister for the two conferences who helped to guide the church plant—traveled to Tabor in October 2004 to share worship and a potluck meal.

They also shared much inspiration, as Potter House members and the couple testified to their passion for sharing the gospel. The Parchmonts, who make up to 25 dozen tamales in their kitchen each day to sell to restaurants, also tend to God's business around the clock. They reach out to people who struggle with immigration, substance abuse and marital, emotional and financial turmoil.

"Our work, which includes the tamale business and the church, takes all the time we have, and even though we are exhausted most of the time, it is a beautiful life," Alberto says. "We've learned never to say that 'today we're not going to do anything for the church so that we can focus on our business.'

We've learned never to say that "today we're not going to do anything for the church so that we can focus on our business."
—Alberto Parchmont

Continued on page 10

Aurora Parchmont (center) visits at the new church plant with Violeta Ajquejay (left), coordinator of the Anabaptist Biblical Institute, and Linda Shelly, Latin America director for Mennonite Mission Network.

Laurie L. Oswald

Continued from page 9

"We've discovered that God's kingdom is our business, because we get calls anytime day or night. And we drop everything and go. We want to be available to all the people in our community who have so many needs."

For example, one night about nine o'clock, as an exhausted Alberto was heating food in the oven so he could sit down for the first time that day to eat, the phone rang. A distraught couple asked the Parchmonts to come to their home because the husband had just beat his wife, and she was bathed in blood.

"We were there until 2 a.m. to minister and pray with them, and we watched God do something beautiful," Aurora says. "The man turned over his pistol to us and his drugs and other bad things. He cried and said he didn't want this kind of life. …

"Because of what God did, [this man] testifies about how their home life has completely changed. … These miracles happen, and they are recompense for all the times we thought we were too tired to make another ministry call."

Potter's fire sparks Tabor: As the Parchmonts minister to such people, they experience the fullness of spiritual nourishment—the kind that Tabor is learning more about in their relationship with Potter House. Corey Miller, the lead pastor, says Anglos have much to learn from Hispanics about having passion for people who are hungry for God and the willingness to feed them.

"They have a freshness and freeness in worship, an openness to the Holy Spirit and a passion for sharing the gospel," Corey says. "We have a lot to learn from them about their attentiveness to God and their ability to share with their friends, families and neighbors about what God is doing."

Archie Schmidt, a Tabor member, is excited about these new friendships. He served in PAX in Bolivia from 1968 to 1970 and fell in love with the Hispanic culture and Spanish language. But he's not been able to return and is eager to build friendships here in the United States.

"Our Hispanic brothers and sisters have a different outlook on things," Archie says. "We tend to get ingrown, and they bring some new enthusiasm and openness from the outside. It inspires us to approach those who aren't part of our faith community and be more positive about reaching out."

Caring leads to caring: The Parchmonts say their passion for reaching out comes from experiencing caring people in their time of need. Alberto came to the United States from Nicaragua to work but lacked working papers and was taken to a detention center, where members from Iglesia Menonita del Cordero in Brownsville visited detainees. About that time, Aurora, who is from Mexico, began attending Cordero, and she and Alberto met through mutual contacts.

They were married and baptized at Cordero, where they worshiped for many years while raising a family of seven children. Alberto worked in asbestos removal and other jobs before 9-11 slowed

They have a freshness and freeness in worship, an openness to the Holy Spirit and a passion for sharing the gospel.
—Corey Miller

Kim Funk

Members of Tabor Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., and Potter House Mennonite Church in Houston gather for fellowship in fall 2004 at Tabor. The two churches are sister congregations.

business. Both of them have become U.S. citizens.

"Our first motivation for coming to Houston was that there was more work here, and we had a big family to support," Aurora says. "But a brother from Cordero encouraged us to realize that God had another calling for us in Houston. ... So we began Bible studies and prayer meetings at our house.

"At first the only people who were there were my husband and myself and our children. But we prayed, and by our third meeting 15 people filled up our little space. ... By the first time Marco [Guete, a conference minister] came to visit us, all the people couldn't fit here anymore. After spiritual support from Marco and some funding support from Western District, we are renting a building and began the church."

Today, Alberto and Aurora are seeking pastoral training through Instituto Biblico Anabautista (the Anabaptist Biblical Institute). Gilberto Flores, IBA director, and Violeta Ajquejay, staff member, help guide the nearly 115 Spanish-speaking congregations in Mennonite Church USA develop strong leaders, such as the Parchmonts, who minister to about 50 people who attend Sunday worship.

Much of their ministry also happens beyond the church walls, where they help people trust God for salvation, healing and the way of peace. They often visit people in their homes—a style that's part of their relational culture—and focus much on family relationships.

Tabor joins in their efforts by offering friendship, a visiting exchange and financial support and will give its tithe for the next five years to their sister congregation. The Parchmonts say they are grateful for this support, cross-cultural friendships and prayer. It enables them to bring Christ's peace to people in pain.

"We see God working in people's lives in tremendous ways, and great miracles are happening through prayer," Aurora says. "People are being freed of vices such as drugs. Rocks of bitterness are melting away in people's hearts and marriages are being reconciled.

"We've wondered why this church is growing so fast, and people tell us it is the first place where they've heard that God loves sinners. They learn about Jesus and discover that they can come to him and to his cross for forgiveness. ... For the first time in their lives, they are finding real solutions to their problems."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

WHO speaks for

If we are children of God, how can we choose to hate and support the killing of people God loves?

by Don Blosser

Jesus calls us to justice, peace and hope, but justice and peace are not popular words today. If the church is silent, the world will fill the silence with its own explanation of God, and that language shapes how we see the world.

Psalm 79 is a lament over the destruction of the temple, as Babylon seemed intent on conquering the world. Israel was in shock, facing daily terror as the unthinkable had just happened. An enemy army had struck at the heart of the city, and life would never be the same again.

People are using the name of God a lot these days, often in ways that have little to do with God. But don't blame the politicians, maybe we should blame the church.

Facing the Babylonian threat, Israel cried out to God: "How long, O Lord? Will you be angry forever? Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need," (NIV).

That is a good human response. But wait. In the middle of those four sentences is something else: "Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on peoples who do not call on your name." And a few verses later, "Pay back on them seven times the reproach that they have hurled at you, O Lord."

Pay them back for what they have done, not to us but to you, O Lord. Suddenly God is being dragged into the middle of a war between two nations. I hear similar things today: "God, don't blame us for the sins of our parents—show mercy because your children are hurting. You must show the world that you are on our side—you must protect your holy name by saving us."

People are using the name of God a lot these days, often in ways that have little to do with God. But don't blame the politicians, maybe we should blame the church.

GOD?

Military mission: We believe God is about healing, mercy, forgiveness, reconciliation and salvation—at least for us. In Jeremiah's day people would have said the same thing. But when the nation went to war, King Jehoiakim used the name of God to rally support for this military mission, and the religious leaders quickly fell into step behind the king.

But not Jeremiah. The religious leaders said, "We are wise, for we have the law of the lord" (Jeremiah 8:8-9, NIV). (Translation: "We know we are right, and we can quote Scripture to prove it.") How did Jeremiah respond? "How can you say that, when the lying pens of the scribes have twisted it so badly. What kind of wisdom is that?"

How do you turn truth into a lie? Follow the progression of these six simple steps:

1. God is about salvation, redemption, healing and peace.
2. Peace is an ideal for pastors, priests and nuns who have a special calling.
3. Peace is an optional extra. You may decide for yourself because it is not central to salvation.
4. Peace has nothing to do with the gospel. The message of Jesus is internal and spiritual, dealing with heaven. Peace is an external, political issue that won't work today because the stakes are so high and the enemy is so evil.
5. War is the way to deal with evil, and since we are godly people, we fight in the name of God against pagan infidels whom God hates.
6. Since God is on our side, God will bless us in this war. If you object to this war, you are neither godly nor patriotic, for we know God is with us—not them.

What is happening is in direct defiance of what Jesus taught. No wonder the nations of this world hate us and claim that God is really on their side.

The Jewish Talmud has a story about angels in heaven watching the children of Israel, who are trapped at the Red Sea, with the Egyptian army coming up behind them. Suddenly the sea opens and the children of Israel run through to the other side. The Egyptian army comes charging after them, but the walls of water collapse and they are drowned. The angels burst into songs of joy, but God admonishes them, "How can you sing when my children are dying." "Oh," say the angels, "they aren't dying, they made it." And God quietly responds, "The Egyptians are also my children, and they are dying. ... How can I sing songs of joy?"

It is the height of hypocrisy to presume to tell God whom God must love (us) and whom God must hate (them), then expect God to bless us as we try to kill them.

Warring deity: It is so easy to get swept up in the narrow nationalism of wartime enthusiasm. We forget that Yahweh never intended to be a warring nationalistic deity for Israel (although Israel pushed hard for that). Neither is God a nationalistic warring deity for 20th-century America (and we push just as hard as Israel did). Jesus teaches that God is over all nations and that God's love and mercy extends to all people, even those who do not yet name the name of Jesus.

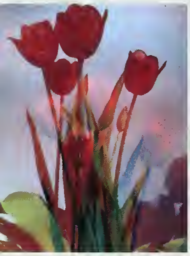
If we are children of God, how can we choose to hate and support the killing of people whom God loves? It is the height of hypocrisy to presume to tell God whom God must love (us) and whom God must hate (them), then expect God to bless us as we try to kill them. We are right back in Psalm 79, telling God to protect God's own name by defending us.

That brings us to 1 Timothy 2, where we are told to pray for our leaders, but note those prayers are not for military success on the battlefield. We are to

Continued on page 14

The call of God is still the ageless message of Jesus that God loves all people, and we are to proclaim and live this message of salvation, love, reconciliation, peace and healing for all humanity.

Continued from page 13



pray for kings (and presidents) that they might lead us into peace because God wants all people to know the truth and to be saved. This sequence suggests that God knows that in times of war the truth is not proclaimed, and people are not being saved. Thus war is a violation of God's intentions for humanity. This presents a logical, theological impossibility: We cannot proclaim the gospel of Jesus, saying that God loves you, while we are killing you in the name of that same God. Jeremiah said that is not God's way, Jesus said that is not how God is, and 1 Timothy says that is not what God wants. Where did we get the idea that now the Bible is different and the message no longer applies to us?

Life is sacred: Jesus teaches that we should see every human being as a person loved by God. I have never learned how to watch people die on TV without feeling sick inside. It hurts when I see young American men or women being killed in Iraq because every human life is sacred, and every victim of war has a mother, father, husband, wife, sister, brother or children. Their loss is tragic, and my heart cries for them. But when Iraqi mothers, fathers, children cry out to God because their own fathers, spouses, sons and daughters are being killed, the pain is equally unbearable, and my heart cries out to God in the same way.

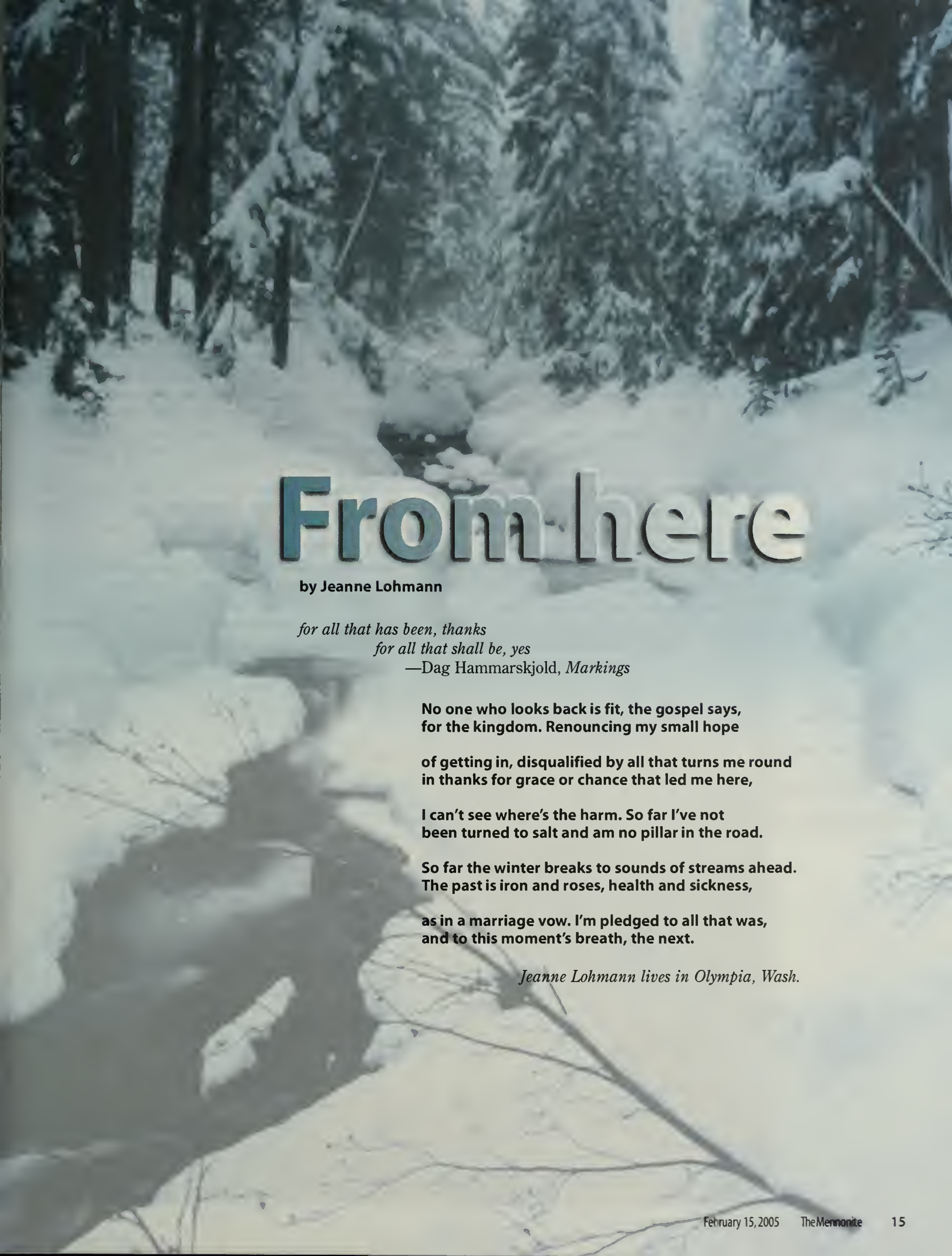
I cannot condemn soldiers for doing what the nation tells them to do when the church is silent about the teachings of Jesus on how Christians should respond to war. I do not hold the nation accountable for going to war, because that is what nations do, but for claiming this is God's war and that God approves of what we are doing to people God loves every bit as much as God loves us. I hold the church accountable for remaining silent—or worse, for giving its support to the nation in fighting this war. I plead today that the church regain its voice and speak out for God.

Here are four summary statements from Jeremiah, the Psalmist, Jesus, and 1 Timothy:

1. Our salvation rests in God—not in military liberation carried out "in the name of God."
2. The message of the gospel is still salvation, peace, reconciliation and healing, and we are not free to change that message just to be politically correct.
3. As believers in God, as revealed to us in Jesus, we cannot call upon God to destroy our enemies so that we can live in comfort and security—no matter how despicable our national leaders declare that enemy to be.
4. The call of God is still the ageless message of Jesus that God loves all people, and we are to proclaim and live this message of salvation, love, reconciliation, peace and healing for all humanity.

I pray that God fill us with God's love for all people everywhere, so that it flows through us to others without our ever needing to stop and think about who the person is on the receiving end of that love. That's how God loves us, and we should love others the same way.

This article is based on a sermon Don Blosser gave at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., where he is a member.



From here

by Jeanne Lohmann

for all that has been, thanks
for all that shall be, yes
—Dag Hammarskjold, *Markings*

No one who looks back is fit, the gospel says,
for the kingdom. Renouncing my small hope

of getting in, disqualified by all that turns me round
in thanks for grace or chance that led me here,

I can't see where's the harm. So far I've not
been turned to salt and am no pillar in the road.

So far the winter breaks to sounds of streams ahead.
The past is iron and roses, health and sickness,

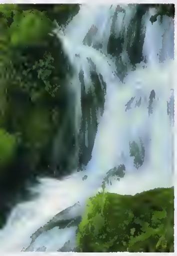
as in a marriage vow. I'm pledged to all that was,
and to this moment's breath, the next.

Jeanne Lohmann lives in Olympia, Wash.

Jesus' reconnaissance

Jesus declares himself Messia at Caesarea Philippi.

by C. Norman Kraus



I often wondered why Jesus made what must have been a hot and difficult trip to the "district of Caesarea Philippi" (Matthew 16:13) to ask his disciples who they thought he was. It must have been at least a full day's trip from Bethsaida on foot through rough and rocky terrain up hill all the way. Was he escaping the growing pressures of the Pharisees and Sadducees mentioned in the preceding verses (vv. 11-12), as some scholars have suggested? What was at Caesarea Philippi that drew him there to ponder the Messiah's identity and mission with his students?

Then on a study tour to Israel and Jordan I visited the district, and it suddenly became clear. He was on a reconnaissance mission. He went to see "the Gates of Hades" ("pulai Haidou") for himself and survey the strength of the adversary. And it was in this topographical setting that he tested the depth of insight and commitment of his followers.

Did they really know who he was and what his mission was? Did they have any idea what they were up against? And would they stand fast against the onslaughts of the powers of the netherworld and the political powers of the Roman Empire? Indeed, from the way Matthew relates the events in chapters 15 and 16, he may well have been weighing his own emerging conviction that his mission was not to be limited to his Jewish compatriots.

Jesus has a vision of a kingdom that is not an empire based on the rock of military dominance and the water of economic wealth.

But first we need to understand the significance of this cavernous shrine with its fountains of fresh water from deep in the earth in order to explain this. And we need to put the event in Matthew's setting. Matthew is writing for the church toward the end of the first century, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of temple sacrifices. The apostle Paul's amazing and controversial expansion of the messianic mission to the Gentiles was contemporary history.

A major debate was dividing the Christians. Should the new movement that viewed Jesus as Messiah continue the pattern of the Pharisees' mission in the Roman world, simply expanding and perhaps liberalizing it in "the name of Jesus"? Or should it follow the lead of Paul, who broke decisively with some of the customs ("traditions") that defined Judaism, and proclaimed Jesus as "Lord"? We know Matthew's bias from his wording of the Great Commission in 28:19-20. He stood with Paul, although he seems to have put more emphasis on the centrality of Jesus' life pattern for new converts.

To set the textual context for Jesus' words to Peter, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (16:18), we need yet to note that chapter 15 introduces Jesus' altercation with the "Pharisees and scribes who came up from Jerusalem" (15:1). Then follow accounts of his expanded ministry to Tyre and Sidon and the non-Jewish western side of Lake Galilee before he returns to Magdala, where these Pharisees again accost him. Matthew notes that the non-Jews had great faith, and "praised the God of Israel."

It seems clear that the "leaven, or yeast, of the Pharisees," which Jesus warns his disciples against, is the exclusivism and traditionalism that these "from Jerusalem" Pharisees insisted on. Matthew presents Jesus as pondering a major shift away from Jewish exclusivism in his ministry. At first he resists the Canaanite woman's pleas, but her faith and need compel his change of direction. Thus Matthew grounds the Christian mission to the nations in Jesus' own explicit decision.

But now we come to Caesarea Philippi, to the springs where the Jordan River originates some 1,500 feet above sea level. Here is located the cave of Pan, the god of agriculture, which had been a pagan shrine for centuries prior to the time of Christ. The giant cave about 45 feet high and 60 feet wide is recessed in the lower wall of a sheer, 150-foot rock cliff that dominates the scene. The ancients considered this the entrance to the netherworld, or Hades, and built their temples here to various gods. The springs—called the Paneion Springs (modern Banias)—flowing out of this expanse of rock are the source of the river that flows into the Sea of Galilee. They are the miraculous life-giving resource that makes the

utside 'The Gates of Hell'

mission

Hula Valley a fertile agricultural region.

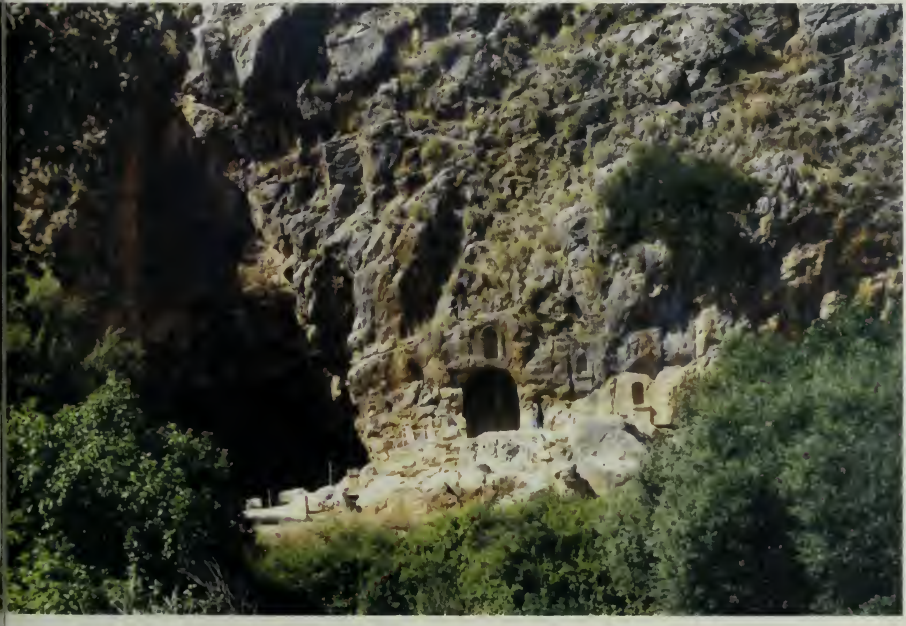
In the first century of the Common Era the temple and statuary that dominated the site was Roman. Herod and his son Philip enlarged and beautified the small town and built a gleaming temple of white marble dedicated to Caesar over the mouth of the cave. Thus when Jesus and his disciples visited the town, it was the symbol of Roman political power allied with agricultural gods of nature. Symbolically Jesus visited Rome.

Ancient empires were based on agricultural wealth. Certainly it is this combined military and economic might of empire that Jesus refers to when he says that "the gates of Hades (hell)" shall not prevail against his movement.

This was an amazing vision of faith. The temple to Caesar was built on the solid rock at the base of the cliff. It was supported by the powers of nature represented in the fresh water springs fed by the snows of Mount Hermon that flowed uninterruptedly through the Hula Valley. (Both these images, rock and springs, are common symbols in the Bible of God's resourceful power and sustenance.) But Jesus has a vision of a kingdom that is not an empire based on the rock of military dominance and the water of economic wealth. His movement ("kingdom") would be built on his missioners, of whom Petros (Peter), which means rock, is the representative. The source of their life-giving water would be the "living God."

Clearly Peter did not understand just how radically different from worldly empires this kingdom that Jesus as the Messiah envisioned would be. Later he came to understand and described its character beautifully in his first letter to Christians scattered over the Roman world. And in his own death by crucifixion he must have come to understand the significance of this decisive point in Jesus' life.

C. Norman Kraus is a member of Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.



C. Norman Kraus

To the left is the "Cave of Pan" or "Gates of Hades" (entrance to the netherworld). The temple of Caesar was built across the front of the cave with an open back wall.

Journal entry on Inauguration Day

David B. Miller is pastor of University Mennonite Church, State College, Pa.

Jan 20, 2005: The new year is young, but the quality of its newness is lost under the wearying and seemingly interminable violence in Iraq (a forbidden name on this day of festivity). The party faithful gather this day in the nation's capital to toast themselves and their anointed, as their policies threaten to make toast of us all.

How are we to understand the days in which we live? How am I to understand my own perceptions of the events of the day? Are the pangs in my soul on this Inaugural Day the agony of the Spirit of God or the disgruntled, self-righteous musings of a frustrated liberal?

I prefer to disregard and discard them as the latter. Then I could say to my soul, "Be silent, do not fashion for yourself false burdens of your own envy and loss. Do not attach eschatological significance to your disappointment."

But what if this agony of spirit is God-breathed? Then would not silence be disobedience and cowardice? Which is it, O God?

Jeremiah 20:9: *If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot."*

While the celebrations will go on into the early morning with music and dancing, cheers and toasts will echo with confidence and pride, yet I hear a subtext, refused admission to the viewing stands and locked out of the ballrooms. The persistent words of the shepherd of Tekoa uttered more than 2,500 years ago:

Hear this, you who trample upon the needy, and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great, and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

Shall not the land tremble on this account, and every one mourn who dwells in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?"

"And on that day," says the Lord God, "I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight.

I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son, and the end of it like a bitter day.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.—Amos 8:4-11

On this day of opulent feasting, where is heard the cry of the orphan whose parents were gunned down at checkpoints or detonated into eternity by IEDs? Who speaks for the alien imprisoned without charge and without protection of law? Who sees the widow whose arduous labor cannot provide home, food and health for her children?

The one who is lifted up this day declares there will be no investigation of a war fought on false premises. The one lifted up on this day received counsel from his legal advisers on how to avoid being charged with war crimes and now seeks to name as the highest law enforcement official in the land one who has declared the Geneva conventions "quaint." The one who is lifted up this day willfully deceived a nation—and sought to deceive the world—about grounds for war. This one will place his hand on sacred Scripture and declare, "So help me God."

So help me what? Help me "deliver the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper." Help me have "pity on the weak and the needy, and save the lives of the needy" (Psalm 82). Or help me maintain the charade and hide the deception?

Will the hand placed on the Book tremble? Will it feel the Word given the shepherd of Tekoa rising off the page. Will that Word squeeze through the fingers and possess the one lifted up this day and accomplish its purpose? Or will the Book, having been invoked and employed in this imperial service, remain closed and be unceremoniously returned to the shelf?

Kyrie eleison. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **You did it to these**—Leslie Homer-Cattell
- **Ethical challenges for retirement communities** —Willard S. Kraybill
- **Lenten prayers**—David Stevens

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

MCC appoints Davis as new executive

He becomes the seventh leader of the 85-year-old relief and service agency.

Robert William Davis has been appointed the next Mennonite Central Committee executive director. MCC is an 85-year-old relief, development and peace agency.

Davis, currently senior vice president of program services for Freedom from Hunger in Davis, Calif., will begin his assignment June 1. During the month of June he will work closely with the outgoing executive director, Ronald J.R. Mathies, and will assume full responsibilities at the end of the month. Mathies, who announced his retirement in September 2003, has served as executive director for nine years.

A native of Lancaster County, Pa., Davis brings extensive international development, poverty alleviation and public health experience to the job. He holds a master's degree in public health and a doctorate in population dynamics, both from Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, Baltimore. He also holds a bachelor of science in theology from Lancaster (Pa.) Bible College.

Davis says he is motivated by a strong vision for Christian ministry and a desire "to serve and seek to be an agent of reconciliation, a faithful servant and a community builder." He has also taught in the Summer Peacebuilding Institute at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

"Dr. Davis has a work and life vision that aligns with the vision of MCC," says Donella Clemens, a member of the selection committee and former MCC executive committee member. "He brings an eagerness and enthusiasm to be part of the MCC mission."

MCC board chair Karen Klassen Harder says, "Robb brings a particular combination of qualities to the position, including having lived and worked abroad, skills to build partnerships across national, language and cultural lines, and experience leading organizations and people."

Early in his career Davis served as a health technical adviser and administrator for World Vision in the west African country of Mauritania. He has served as an independent consultant to various development agencies such as the International Assistance Mission, Catholic Relief Services, the World Bank, Peace Corps and the International Catholic Migration Committee.

Davis is also chair of the Child Survival Collaborations and Resources Group, a 38-member professional consortium of U.S. nongovernmental organizations engaged in maternal and child health work around the world.

Davis was appointed through a selection process that began in April 2004. Candidates were interviewed during November and December 2004.

Davis and his wife, Nancy, are parents of two children. Their elder child is a student at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and their younger remains at home. The couple are founding members of a Mennonite house fellowship in Davis, Calif. While living in Lancaster they attended East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church.—*Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

Robb brings a particular combination of qualities to the position including having lived and worked abroad, skills to build partnerships … and experience leading organizations and people.
—Karen Klassen Harder

Mennonite Central Committee profile

Executive secretaries
(Titled executive director as of 1996)

Levi Mumaw	1920 - 1935
Orie O. Miller	1935 - 1958
William T. Snyder	1958 - 1982
Reginald Toews	1982 - 1985
John A. Lapp	1985 - 1996
Ronald J. R. Mathies	1996

- Total donations, government grants, sales and material aid received by Mennonite Central Committee from U.S. and Canadian sources during fiscal year 2004 (April 1, 2003, to March 31, 2004): $64,508,000*

- Value of food and material resources shipped overseas in fiscal year 2004: $8,520,775

- Number of countries with MCC workers last year: 50

- Number of MCC workers last year: 1,272*

- Amount raised by North American relief sales and thrift stores last year: $16,413,000

*This figure excludes Ten Thousand Villages, a self-supporting program of MCC.

Source: Mennonite Central Committee News Service

Pastors Week focuses on technology use

Participants debate the use of email for pastoral care, in congregational life.

Mary E. Klassen

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary Pastors Week presenter Marva Dawn (left) talks with Martha Turner, an AMBS student from South Bend, Ind.

"Will this help me love God and love my neighbor better? That is the central question Christians should ask to evaluate everything from worship practices to use of email," speaker Marva Dawn told participants at the annual Pastors Week, Jan. 24-27, at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind.

Dawn, an educator and theologian who holds a doctorate in Christian ethics and the Scriptures from the University of Notre Dame, focused on the theme "Pastoring in a Culture of Affluence and Technology." She advocated the use of technology in worship, congregational life and personal lives according to what is most important to us as Christians—what she called our "focal concerns."

"Technology and affluence both are used to exert power over other people," Dawn said in her final presentation. "I want to talk about giving up our power and reloading ourselves with God's power, which is the power of vulnerability and self-donation. I don't believe we can deal with the affluence and technology of our society unless we die to it, really die to the need to possess wealth and the need for technology to give us quick fixes."

While emphasizing that she is not against technology and that her life is dependent upon technology, she said, "that quick-fix attitude and that money-can-solve-everything attitude are destroying our society and destroying the world. North America uses a disproportionate amount of the world's goods, and we are destroying the rest of the world as a result. There has to be a death to that if we want to rise again into the new life of God's way of being."

In one morning session during the week, the 200 participants were invited to share their own questions and experiences with technology and affluence. Differing points of view emerged on how well email communication helps in ministry.

One pastor emphasized email as a wonderful gift for pastoring and gave the example of communicating easily and efficiently with the church treasurer. But many pastors expressed concerns and cautions about email because it leaves out those who do not have computers or email access and because it removes the face-to-face dimension of communication.

A seminary student shared how she believes she is serving as a pastor as she communicates online in a support group for families with children who share the same illness as her sons. Another pastor said that in her affluent congregation, the challenge is to teach members how to rely on God and what it means to know that God will provide.

Workshops gave participants additional opportunities to explore issues related to the use of technology. AMBS faculty members and other church leaders led sessions on the practice of morning and evening prayer, focal living in a time of systemic distraction and evaluating the effectiveness of technology in worship.

A group from Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., led worship services for Pastors Week. This group included Harold and Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel who served as worship leaders, and a musical group from the congregation.

Marva Dawn works with Christians Equipped for Ministry of Vancouver, Wash., and is a teaching fellow in spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. Calling herself a transdenominationalist who finds some aspect of truth in many Christian denominations, she retains a membership at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind., from her time in graduate school.—*from an Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary release by Mary E. Klassen*

Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference
"Unlocking Our Inheritance"
April 7-9, 2005

Historical persecutors have asked to reconcile with present day Anabaptists from all backgrounds and denominations. Everyone with Anabaptist heritage is invited to join Swiss Reformed leaders for a powerful time of reconciliation and restoration.

For conference details and registration information write to:
Anabaptist Reconciliation. P.O. Box 2243 Lancaster, PA 17608-2243, Or, visit our website:
www.anabaptistreconciliation.org or Call 717-898-6602.
Held at Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland PA

Maxed-out crowd at seminary gathering

School for Leadership Training features Mennonite Church USA's consultant.

Jim Bishop

Patrick Keifert, president and director of Church Innovations in Minneapolis, was the plenary speaker at the 2005 School for Leadership Training.

A capacity crowd gathered Jan. 17-19 at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va., for EMS' annual School for Leadership Training, where guest resource speaker Patrick Keifert mixed wit and keen insight while addressing the conference theme, "Dwelling in God's Space and Time: Core Practices for Transforming Leaders."

The gathering of 320 registrants—regrettably, some had to be turned away—were invited to "dwell" on Luke 10:1-12, the biblical text repeated during the four-day gathering.

The Scripture recounts Jesus sending out his followers in pairs to spread the good news of the gospel, declaring that "the kingdom of God has come near you."

Keifert is president and director of Church Innovations in Minneapolis, a research and consulting organization that assists congregations in moving from a "maintenance" mode to "a mission-driven" mindset.

He has done consulting work for Mennonite Church USA and several regional Mennonite conferences. He is also professor of systematic theology at Luther Seminary and adjunct professor of law at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minn.

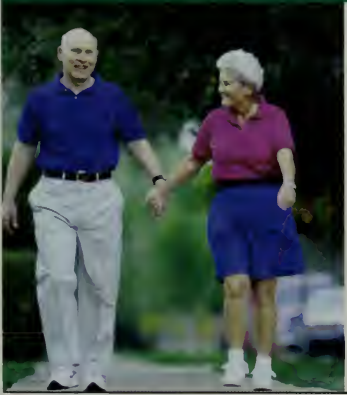
"We spend too much time as congregations focusing on what we don't have or how we differ from other groups," Keifert said, "rather than dwelling on what God has given us and allowing ourselves to be caught up in God's purposes for us.

"Transformation is being, not doing. It is tending to the movement of God and going with that flow. It doesn't happen overnight, but one senses it happening when there is … increased vitality in the congregation and the emphasis shifts from 'program' to 'ministry' to an alignment with God's purposes for the church."

The change element in this process, Keifert said, is "the Holy Spirit who provides all the gifts a church needs," along with allowing "God's imagination" to help turn fantasy into reality and truth.

"We must begin by dwelling in the study of Scripture … with people you don't normally do it with to gain fresh perspective," he said.

Each of Keifert's plenary sessions opened with representatives from three Mennonite congregations that have undergone significant transformation telling their stories: Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va.; Capitol Christian Fellowship, Laurel, Md.; and West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.—*from an Eastern Mennonite University release by Jim Bishop*



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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

D. Michael Hostetler (left), executive director of Nazareth Village and Mennonite Mission Network representative, President Jimmy Carter and Nakhle Bishara (right), originator of the vision for Nazareth Village

Courtesy photo

President Carter visits Nazareth Village

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter found time in his trip to the Middle East to drive north to Nazareth on Jan. 8 to visit Nazareth Village, the full-scale replica of a first-century village in Nazareth. Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, have been honorary chairs for Nazareth Village since the inception of the idea in 1997, but neither had previously visited the site. They were in Palestine and Israel to observe the Palestinian elections Jan. 11.

Accompanied by former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman and former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, the Nobel Peace Prize recipient toured the village with a group that included the mayor of Nazareth, Nazareth Village board members and friends of the village. Guided by D. Michael Hostetler, the village's executive director and a worker with Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness, the group toured first-century houses, an olive press, a winepress and a synagogue in the heart of Nazareth, just a few blocks away from where it is thought Jesus grew up.

The village receives guests from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. The former president asked about the number of visitors to the site and the religious backgrounds of these visitors. He urged Nazareth Village staff to invite religious leaders beyond those of the Christian faith to see the village.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

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Antiracism event at Bluffton University

Damascus Road team will teach others how to organize student-led teams.

Courtesy photo

Yonica Thomas from Paulding, Ohio, and Ami Miller of Newton, Kan., participate in a discussion about antiracism at the Damascus Road training on the Bluffton (Ohio) University campus Jan. 22-23.

Students, faculty and staff explored the issue of antiracism during a training session on the Bluffton (Ohio) University campus Jan. 22–23. The training was sponsored by the university's Damascus Road team and Pathways to Mission and Vocation, a university program supported by Lilly Endowment, Inc.

The Damascus Road antiracism process was developed in 1995 and is now part of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. The program is a network of more than 60 teams across the United States that together note the biblical call to reconciliation. They believe that planning for long-term intentional antiracism holds the promise of a renewed anti-racist and multicultural church. Recognizing that this will not come by individual will or personal intent, Damascus Road teams have developed a process to equip church institutions to do the work of antiracism.

The name Damascus Road refers to the transformation that Saul experienced on the road to Damascus as recorded in Acts 9. While Damascus Road provides space for individual transformation, the entire program is designed to work toward long-term transformation of institutions, particularly churches and faith-based organizations.

"The impetus for this training came out of the student Damascus Road team," says Betty Sommer, associate professor of social work and member of the Bluffton campus team, "which was an outgrowth of the student training held a year ago. Students felt that this was a worthwhile experience and wanted to extend the opportunity to others and keep up a momentum for student involvement in antiracism efforts."

During the weekend, 43 participants—made up of 35 Bluffton students and eight faculty and staff members—were led by Damascus Road trainers Phil Brubaker, South Bend, Ind., Felipe Hinojosa, Brownsville, Texas, and Brenda Zook Friesen, Baltimore.

"I participated in the Damascus Road training because … God has commissioned each of us to love his creation," said junior Sandhya Prakash, Aurora, Ill. "People have been discriminated against on the basis of their skin color, and that is wrong."

All the members of the President's Cabinet attended the training.

"I was gratified to spend time with our students as we investigated together the historical roots of racism," said Eric Fulcomer, vice president of enrollment management. "Bluffton University is fortunate to have students who are willing to invest their time and energy to deal with complex and challenging issues."

Bluffton's is the first student-run Damascus Road team among the Mennonite Church USA colleges. The student team from Bluffton will teach others how to organize student-led teams at "Damascus and Beyond," a conference held in Atlanta in March (see pages 7, 32).*—from a Bluffton University release by Robin Bowlus*

> I participated in the Damascus Road training because … God has commissioned each one of us to love His creation.
> —Sandhya Prakash

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CALENDAR

Penn View Christian School, *art show and sale*, March 5, 2-5 p.m. Adults $5.00, students $2.00. Contact Linda Souder, Penn View Christian School, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA18964; phone 215-723-1196.

Penn View Christian School, *art auction and dinner* to benefit PVCS Vision 2020, March 5. Preview 5 p.m., dinner 6 p.m., auction 7:30 p.m. Tickets $50.00 per person. Contact Linda Souder, Penn View Christian School, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964; phone 215-723-1196.

WORKERS

Amstutz, Neil, was installed Jan. 16 as pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Carson, Kelly, was ordained Jan. 16 as hospice chaplain through Chicago (Ill.) Community Mennonite Church.

Heverson, Robert Jr., was licensed for specific ministry Oct. 6, 2004, at Salem Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Janzen, Peter, was licensed Jan. 16 as pastor at First Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Kull, William, was licensed toward ordination Oct. 6, 2004, at Methacton Mennonite Church, Norristown, Pa.

McDonough, Don, was licensed toward ordination Oct. 6, 2004, at Spring Mount Mennonite Church, Schwenksville, Pa.

Schrader, David, was installed Jan. 23 as pastor at Freeport (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Brenneman, Trenton Alex, Nov. 5, to Todd and Chelsea Brenneman, Hollsopple, Pa.

Collins, Lyra Margaret, Dec. 3, to Michael Collins and Christine Reimer, Vancouver, B.C.

Conklin, Tula Isabella, Dec. 2, 2004, to Michael and Thelma Goshnuaer Conklin, Manheim, Pa.

Eveler, Sidney Allen, Dec. 27, 2004, to Mark and Tonya Graber Eveler, Goshen, Ind.

Fetterman, Ethan Crea, Dec. 14, to Jim and Krista Wenger Fetterman, Harrisonburg, Va.

Frederick, Kaylee Marie, Nov. 15, to Eric and Georgetta Frederick, Johnstown, Pa.

Fuimaono, Riley Aloalii, Dec. 30, 2004, to Pouleta and Jackie Anderson Fuimaono, Hartville, Ohio.

Greenleaf, Isaac Jacob, Dec. 24, to Matthew and Janice Wert Greenleaf, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hofer, Alexander Jacob, Dec. 21, 2004, to Mark and Joyce Hochstedler Hofer, Millersburg, Ind.

Hull, Hudson Chlark, Jan. 16, to Kirk and Marcia Stuckey Hull, Wauseon, Ohio.

Jantz, Michael Tyler, Jan. 12, to Jeff and Teresa Hertzler Jantz, Elkhart, Ind.

Kauffman, Harley Mae, Oct. 18, 2002, received for adoption Nov. 29, 2004, by Ryan and Heather Neilson Kauffman, Wayland, Iowa.

Kauffman, Tristan Ryan, April 13, 2000, received for adoption Nov. 29, 2004, by Ryan and Heather Neilson Kauffman, Wayland, Iowa.

Kuntz, Natalia Ann, Jan. 18, to Ian and Melissa Kuntz, Wauseon, Ohio.

McCarty, Aspen James Wadsworth, Dec. 24, 2004, to Phil and Jenna Wadsworth McCarty, Philadelphia.

McWhinnie, Adele Katherine, May 20, 2004, to Lindsay and Suzanne Conrad McWhinnie, Toronto.

Miehls, Maddyson Joy, Jan. 17, to Russ and Kristi King Miehls, Archbold, Ohio.

Miller, Ashlynn Joy, Jan. 5, to Brian and Jody Sommers Miller, Hartville, Ohio.

Miller, Casey Eric, Jan. 14, to Ryan and Heidi Kauffman Miller, Hartville, Ohio.

Miller, Fiona Ruth, Nov. 5, to Nathan and Elaine Tenney Miller, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Miller, MacKenzie Paige, Jan. 17, to Chad and June Stolzfus Miller, Hartville, Ohio.

Musselman, Alysia Nicoleta, Dec. 17, to Paul and Bianca Musselman, Kitchener, Ont.

O'Brian, Conner Lee, Jan. 4, to Mark and Gina Rickhoff O'Brian, Wheat Ridge, Colo.

Mennonite Faith and Practice

Unsettled Weather:
How do I
forgive?
Wilma L. Derksen

Unsettled Weather: ***How do I forgive?***
When Wilma and Cliff Derksens' daughter was killed in 1984, they chose the word "forgiveness," hoping it would somehow spare them the horrors of the aftermath of violence and the ensnaring justice issues. But Wilma confesses: "I soon came to resent anyone who said: "Just forgive" as if it were that easy." In this study guide **Wilma Derksen**, **Tym Elias**, and **Brenda Suderman** share a seven-session tested approach on storytelling. This is a vital resource for persons in classes, study groups, and congregations who wish to take steps toward forgiveness.
Paper, 95 pages, $9.99; in Canada $12.49

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Peters, Kyle Shay and Caden Scott (twins), Jan. 13 to Eric and Shanna Unruh Peters, Prairie Village, Kan.

Piper, Jonathan Joseph, Jan. 7, to Mike and Sarah Miller Piper, Harrisonburg, Va.

Prey-Harbaugh, Sylvan Dean James, Jan. 21, to Darin and Julie Prey-Harbaugh, Philadelphia.

Schrader, Joel Anthony, Sept. 11, 2004, to David and AnnMarie Swartz Schrader, Freeport, Ill.

Schrock, Aaron Jose, Jan. 2, 1998, received for adoption Dec. 13, 2004, by Richard and Amy Slagell Schrock, Foosland, Ill.

Schrock, Eli Marinaldo, Jan. 2, 1997, received for adoption Dec. 13, 2004, by Richard and Amy Slagell Schrock, Foosland, Ill.

Semanchin-Jones, Maggie, Jan. 16, to Chris Jones and Annette Semanchin, Minneapolis, Minn.

Smucker, Natalie Selah Grace, Dec. 21, to David and Sheri Smucker, Harrisonburg, Va.

Stamm, Landon Dean and Corbin Dean (twins), Jan. 18, to Kelsey and Emily Beck Stamm, Archbold, Ohio.

Stauffer, Morgan Julia, Dec. 27, 2004, to Joe and Kim Metzler Stauffer, Lancaster, Pa.

Troyer, Anya Kathleen, Jan. 11, to Steve and Lara Breeze Troyer, Fort Collins, Colo.

West, Natalie Lyn, Dec. 14, 2004, to Bret and Ronda Leichty West, Wayland, Iowa.

Yoder, Blake Chad, Jan. 24, to Chad and Julie Marcho Yoder, Harleysville, Pa.

DEATHS

Bender, Mary Birky, 95, Wellman, Iowa, died Dec. 26, 2004. Spouse: Edwin C. Bender (deceased). Parents: Christian and Magdalena Kauffman Birky. Children: Shirley Yoder, Karen Leidig; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa.

Blosser, Lois Rheinheimer, 82, Goshen, Ind., died Dec. 20, 2004. Spouse: Virgil Blosser. Parents: Clayton and Maude Mae Miller Rheinheimer. Children: Glen, Sheldon; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Bontrager, Elizabeth, 81, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 6. Parents: Henry R. and Clara J. Schrock Bontrager. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Yoder Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Brenneman, Eva Wideman, 94, Hesston, Kan., died Dec. 29, 2004. Spouse: Titus M. Brenneman (deceased). Parents: William and Sarah Brubacher Wideman. Children: Derald, Bea Brenneman Ruebke, Ervin, Fred, Robert; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 3 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Christner, Verbal Stutzman, 96, Plain City, Ohio, died Jan. 11. Spouse: Joseph M. Christner (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Lydia Miller Stutzman. Child: Kenneth; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Sharon Mennonite Church, Plain City.

Clemens, Eva H. Kulp, 91, Harleysville, Pa., died Jan. 10. Spouse: G. Earl Clemens. Parents: Abram and Anna Halteman. Children: Harold K., Clyde K.; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 14 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Homes.

Eash, Fern Weaver, 86, Lewisburg, Pa., died Jan. 1. Spouse: Earl W. Eash. Parents: Vern F. and Maggie Weaver. Funeral: Jan. 5 at Boyer Mennonite Church, Middleburg, Pa.

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Eberly, Leroy N., 93, New Holland, Pa., died Dec. 26, 2004. Spouse: Grace Sauder Eberly (deceased). Parents: Amos S. and Grace Nolt Eberly. Children: Miriam, Ruth Harnish, Naomi Gochenaur, Mary Matthews, Robert, Linda Miller; 12 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Finkbiner, Myra Herr, 95, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Christian H. Herr (deceased). Parents: Clayton and Amelia Nissley Herr. Step-children: Raymond, Jay; eight step-grandchildren; 17 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Ford, Patricia Anne, 55, Hanover, Ont., died Jan. 3. Parents: Harold and Madeline Yaeck Ford. Funeral: Jan. 9 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Graber, Mildred M. Liechty, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died Jan. 14. Spouse: Raymond J. Graber (deceased). Parents: Silas and Sarah Frey Liechty. Children: John, Ken, Dave, Deloris Good; 12 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Groff, Grace Hess, 81, Millersville, Pa., died Jan. 24. Spouse: Melvin S. Groff. Parents: Amos and Mary Eshleman Hess. Children: Paul H., Marlin H.; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Masonville Mennonite Church, Washington Boro, Pa.

Gross, Ralph, 92, Washington, Ill., died Jan. 17. Spouse: Gladys Nyberg Gross. Parents: Herman and Emma Imhoff Gross. Child: Joan Hoff; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Gusler, Esther Lantz, 95, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 16. Spouse: Kenneth C. Gusler (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Rosa Hershberger Lantz. Children: Audrey Swartzendruber, Karen, Carl, Duane; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Hunsberger, David Leslie, 76, Wellesley, Ont., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Katherine Nafziger Hunsberger. Children: Peter, Robert, Fred, Kristine; three grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 10 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Kamp, Orville, 96, Washington, Ill., died Jan. 18. Spouse: Margaret Hartman Kamp. Parents: Daniel and Anna Ulrich Kamp. Children: Corrinne Boehr, Warren; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Keefer, Franklin D., 90, Fort Wayne, Ind., died Dec. 11, 2004, of cancer. Spouse: Evelyn Keefer. Children: Robert, James; stepchild John Simpson; 11 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 15 at D.O. McComb Maplewood Park Funeral Home, Fort Wayne.

Loewen, Peter N., 88, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Jan. 25. Spouse: Elizabeth E. Penner Loewen. Parents: Henry F. and Katherine Niessen Loewen. Children: David, LaDonna Stout, Loretta Gorman, Marjorie Rasmussen; 14 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Longenecker, Henry Z., 91, Lancaster, Pa., died Jan. 10. Spouse: (1st) Rachel Metzler Longenecker (deceased), (2nd) Nancy Frey Longenecker. Parents: Harry and Irene Zimmerman Longenecker. Children: Marian Burkholder, Carolyn Horst, Elaine Clymer, Gloria Lehman, Nancy Pellegrini; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Steelton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Nolt, Aldus M., 84, Ephrata, Pa., died Dec. 24, 2004. Spouse: Ellen B. Landis Nolt (deceased). Parents: Joseph H. and Nettie Martin Nolt. Children: Elsie Hanna, Mary K., Verna Martin, Earl E.; 10 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Oberholtzer, Rebecca Stoner, 79, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 3. Spouse: John Jacob Oberholtzer. Parents: Roy W. and Anna Margie Groff Stoner. Children: David, John Carl, Ruth Ann Buch, Beth; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola.

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Plett, George H., 91, Inman, Kan., died Jan. 10. Spouse: Edna Plett. Children: Jan Mauch, Jewel Nickel; three grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Schmidt, Katharina "Kate" Harder, 97, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Jan. 20. Spouse: Benjamin G. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Henry D. and Katharina Saukau Harder. Children: Alvin, Gladys Fast; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Schrock, Glenn, 98, Eureka, Ill., died Dec. 30, 2004. Spouse: Maona Nafziger Schrock (deceased). Parents: William and Fannie Ulrich Schrock. Children: Robert, Betty Bachman, Phyllis Bachman, Donna Denning, Jean Peters, Glenda Bachman; 29 grandchildren; 48 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 4 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington, Ill.

Schwager, Carol Ann Derstine, 51, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Ronald E. Schwager. Parents: Garland and Marilyn Godshall Derstine. Children: Benjamin, Christopher, Erik; one grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Schwartz, Rebecca A., 50, Chester, Va., died Jan. 17 of a heart attack. Parents: Victor and Agnes Eicher Schwartz. Funeral: Jan. 27 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Shank, Luke J., 80, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 11, 2004. Spouse: Anna Elizabeth Metzler Shank (deceased). Parents: Harvey E. and Anna Martin Shank. Children: Duane, Calliope (Dottie), Debbie Miller, Dan; six grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 14 at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Steria, Ernest, 86, Croghan, N.Y., died Jan. 10. Spouse: Dorothy Gadbaw Steria. Parents: Joseph and Helen Noftsier Steria. Children: Verna Schack, Betty Bush, Diane, Bessie Chartrand, Dorothy Moser, Jane Widrick, Cindy Leaf, Gloria Zehr; 17 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at Croghan Mennonite Church.

Stucky, Gary L., 63, North Newton, Kan., died Jan. 30. Spouse: Janet Harder Stucky. Parents: Martin and Ruby Stucky. Funeral: Feb. 4 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Swartzendruber, Fred J., 80, Sarasota, Fla., died Nov. 30, 2004. Spouse: Dolce Bell Swartzendruber. Parents: Fred E. and Ella Augsburger Swartzendruber. Children: Fred D., Anita Fobes, Galen P., Stephen J.; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Dec. 29 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Wenger, Roy E., 96, Missoula, Mont., died Nov. 30, 2004. Spouse: (1st) Florence Wenger (deceased), (2nd) Lillian Wenger. Child: Susan Duffy; two grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 6 at University Congregational Church, Missoula.

Wyble, Ruth Myers, 93, Lititz, Pa., died Jan. 2. Spouse: Lester C. Wyble (deceased). Parents: Elmer E. and Katie Musselman Myers. Children: Howard, David, Charles, Ruth Bushong; 11 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 7 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Wyse, Joan B., 68, Elkhart, Ind., died Dec. 9, 2004, of cancer. Spouse: Donald E. Wyse (deceased). Parents: Bert and Julia Griman Sternal. Funeral: Dec. 12 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Yoder, Jonas D., 86, Arthur, Ill., died Jan. 19. Spouse: Rachel Y. Yoder. Parents: David Y. and Magdalena Schrock Yoder. Children: Wesley, Richard (deceased); three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 22 at Arthur Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Rolland M., 91, Kalona, Iowa, died Dec. 27, 2004. Spouse: Cordell Swarzendruber Yoder. Parents: Levi M. and Tillie Yoder. Children: Don G., Doug, Linford; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 31 at Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church, Kalona.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2005.

Western seeks a passionate, dynamic ***music director*** to lead its award-winning choir program. Director will oversee five choirs and two bands, involving 80 percent of the student body. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in music education or vocal performance. Teaching license and experience desired.

Contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or email him at djwhite@westernmennoniteschool.org

Western seeks female candidates interested in youth ministry to serve as ***resident assistant*** for its high school resident program. Responsibilities include mentoring students, planning and supervising activities mainly during the weekday program. This is a volunteer position with benefits.

Closing: March 31. Contact Sherri-Lynn Wenger at 866-343-9378 or sherriwenger@hotmail.com.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students from several states/provinces and from around the world. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. We are seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Goshen College seeks a full-time ***director of counseling services*** available to work for an annual 10-month contract to begin April 25. The director of counseling services provides mental health assessment, short-term counseling, educational programming and crisis intervention in collaboration with the student life team.

Qualifications: a master's degree in counseling, social work, clinical psychology or a closely related mental health studies program. Three years of counseling experience in mental health setting preferred; licensed as a mental health professional in Indiana also preferred. Skills required include strong interpersonal skills, ability to work collaboratively and independently.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment?. Please send or fax letter of application, resumé and three letters of reference to 574-535-7060 or attach an email to hr@goshen.edu. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Camp Deerpark is seeking to fill the position of ***maintenance director***. This person is responsible for building and grounds maintenance, new construction and supervision of maintenance and housekeeping staff. Salaried position with benefits, including housing and insurance. Camp Deerpark is owned and operated by the New York City Mennonite Churches and offers people of all ages, races and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy Christian camping at an affordable price. For more information please contact Ken Bontrager at 845-754-8669 or admin@campdeerpark.org

Goshen College departments of mathematics and computer science seek applicants for a ***sabbatical replacement*** position to teach courses in at least two of the areas: mathematics, mathematics education and/or computer science. There will either be one full-time hire or multiple part-time hires for one year, with a possible extension to two years.

Master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred, in the mathematical or computer sciences or related field. Must have the ability to teach an appropriate combination of courses the departments plan to offer, which include undergraduate mathematics, mathematics education and computer science topics. A list of these courses can be found at www.goshen.edu/catalog/. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit strong teaching and professional credentials.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/. Please send or fax letter of application, resumé and three letters of reference to 574-535-7060 or attach an email to hr@goshen.edu. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Shirati Hospital (Tanzania) ***fund-raising dinner*** March 12, 6:30 p.m. at The Gathering Place, Mount Joy, Pa. Shirati report, photos and music by Forest Hills Men's Chorus. Information/reservations call 717-399-9499

Bluffton University invites applications for the following positions to begin fall 2005:

Early childhood education (generalist). Full-time, tenure-track faculty position in early childhood education (generalist). Doctorate preferred; ABD considered. Certification in early childhood education (PreK-3). Required minimum of three years teaching in an early childhood classroom, higher education teaching experience preferred. Teach graduate and undergraduate education courses in curriculum and instruction in early childhood education. Supervise student teachers in early education classrooms. Review of applications begins immediately.

Vocal music. Full-time, renewable contract (nontenure-track) position in vocal music. Master's degree in voice required. Teaching experience at the university level preferred. Experience as a soprano or alto performer. Teach applied voice to undergraduate music majors, minors and electives. Teach voice class. Possibly teach in other areas of candidate's expertise and/or in the general education curriculum. Be engaged in a dynamic music program that is growing. Recruit and advise students. Review of applications begins March 1. In addition to the materials listed below, the applicant should submit a recording of a recent performance(s).

Organic chemistry—sabbatical replacement. One-year position in organic chemistry. Ph.D. preferred, master's degree considered. Teach organic chemistry with multiple lab sections. Responsibilities include all lectures; setup, monitor and grade the labs and hold regular office hours. Review of applications begins March 1.

Compensation for these positions is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. For additional information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, resumé or curriculum vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

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Bethany Christian Schools in Goshen, Ind., (gr. 6-12; enrollment 315) invites applications for the full-time position (nine months, March-November) of ***groundskeeper*** to begin on March 1, when installation of the new landscape design will commence. This individual will take responsibility for and pride in maintaining the exterior grounds. Preference will be given to candidates with experience and/or formal training in grounds care. To obtain an application, contact principal Allan Dueck at 574-534-2567 or akdueck@bethanycs.net.

Goshen College seeks a full-time tenure-track ***assistant professor in secondary teacher education*** beginning July 2005. Responsible for oversight of and teaching in the middle school and secondary education programs. Potential increased administrative responsibilities in the future. Work with prospective students, accreditation, advising and committees. Courses may include direction and supervision of secondary student teaching, senior seminar, secondary general curriculum methods, middle school methods, educational psychology.

Qualifications include doctorate in education preferred with minimum three years successful teaching experience in 5-12. Interest and proficiency in program development, evaluation and administration as well as teaching. Good skills in speaking and writing, public relations and computer office software. Establish positive working relationships with faculty, students and public school personnel.

To apply, follow instructions found at Goshen College College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment/. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church. Administrative and teaching faculty members are expected to share this commitment.

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Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 through G8, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire this summer. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Road, Newport News, VA 23602, or LJShowalter@aol.com.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for ***Spanish instructor*** to teach upper-level classes, including AP Spanish, for the 2005-06 school year. Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale PA 19446, fax 215-362-2943, email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Emmanuel Mennonite Church invites applications for a ***full-time pastor*** (youth and young adults).

Emmanuel is a multicultural, intergenerational congregation situated in Abbotsford, B.C. Our church has a membership of approximately 225 people. We are looking for a dynamic individual to work predominantly with our youth, young adults and their families. This individual would be committed to and educated in Anabaptist theology and polity. Experience would definitely be an asset.

If you have questions or wish to apply, contact Emmanuel Mennonite Church, 3471 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford, BC V2T 5C1; 604-854-3654 or email the resumé to office@emmanuelmennonite.com.

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking a person gifted, trained and/or experienced in children's ministries to provide leadership, vision and program development for children birth thru grade 5 for a full-time position. People interested should request an application from Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505, or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

Mennonite Mission Network *Fellowship Visit to Europe*, Sept. 13-28, 2005, hosted by J. Robert Charles, Mission Network Director for Europe. Explore Mission Network ministry sites and meet workers in London, Paris, Brussels and the Netherlands. For more information contact Diana Cook at 866-866-2872, Service@MennoniteMission.net, or www.MennoniteMission.net.

Management opportunity—Multilocation restaurant and retailing business seeking a general manager for mid-central Ohio location. This challenging position involves managing a large staff and requires leadership experience with the ability to provide a progressive vision for the future. Send resumé to P.O. Box 68, Walnut Creek, OH 44687.

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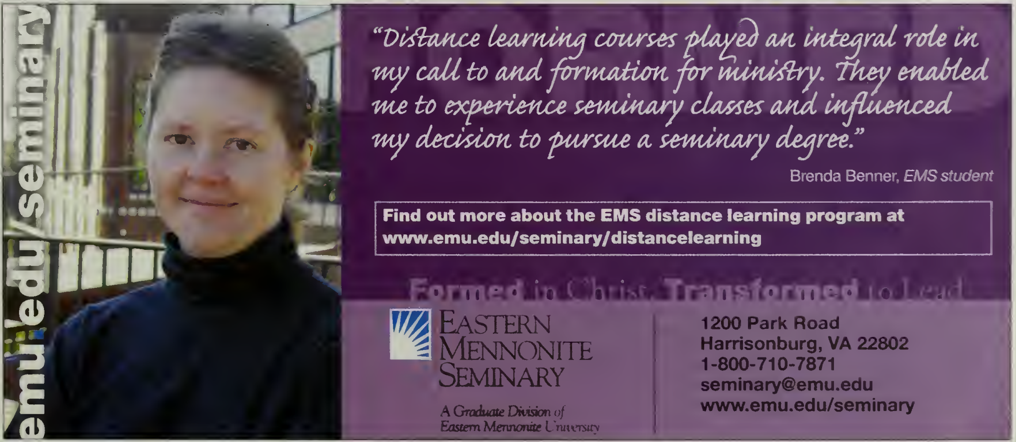
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Love and truth fight melting ice, corruption

Gordon Houser

All I need is the air that I breathe and to love you.
—The Hollies

All you need is love.—The Beatles

So which is it? Perhaps the Hollies were adding a dose of reality to their love song, a genre not known for being too realistic.

If we want to breathe and to love, we might take note of the disturbing trend occurring in Antarctica. Larry Rohter reports (*New York Times*, Jan. 25) that "huge glaciers in ... Antarctica are thinning, and ice shelves the size of American states are either disintegrating or retreating—all possible indications of global warming."

I realize "global warming" is a political football tossed by opposing sides as either the greatest problem facing humankind or a hoax. Yet glaciologists such as Robert Thomas of NASA say, "The evidence is piling up; everything fits."

Unlike free-floating sea ice, glaciers rest on top of land, so that if they slide into the sea, "this adds mass to the ocean, which in turn can raise the global sea level," Rohter writes.

Meanwhile, more study has been done of the Arctic. A study "commissioned by the United States and seven other nations found permafrost there to be thawing and glaciers and sea ice to be retreating markedly, raising new concerns about global warming and its impact," Rohter writes.

Whatever your political views, scientists are observing alarming trends in the Arctic and Antarctica that may leave many of us having to learn how to breathe under water.

Only responsible love for God's earth may prevent that. In which case the Beatles were right.

Just gimme some truth.—John Lennon

One of the obstacles to fighting poverty around the world, we aren't surprised to learn, is widespread corruption. The good news, according to *The Marketplace* (January/February), is that "Christian momentum is growing to combat it."

We often think of this problem in large-scale projects, "but the impact of corruption is also immense at the street level," according to Peter Eigen of Transparency International, a global watchdog group.

For example, Eigen says, many parents have to bribe underpaid teachers to secure an education for their children. "Vast amounts of public funds are being wasted and stolen by corrupt officials." Some development specialists believe corruption deprives poor citizens of nearly a third of their incomes.

But there's hope, and some of it is coming from Christians. *Christianity Today* (November 2004) cites a protest led by the Council of Evangelical Protestants against corruption in Nicaragua.

In Kenya, the magazine reports, "where the average urban resident pays 16 bribes a month for things such as driver licenses, bridge crossings, hospital treatment and favorable court judgments," a Christian musician last summer led 100,000 concert-goers in a musical protest against government corruption.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates, reports *The Marketplace*, "has used a practical business-oriented response to corruption. Several staff members have become specialists in the area of forensic accounting, which helps aid agencies maintain financial integrity and ensure that funds are used on behalf of the poor."

As Christians we stand for truth and justice. We can also stand with our sisters and brothers around the world who live in poverty and suffer the effects of corruption. TM

FILMS

Million Dollar Baby (PG-13) is much more than a boxing movie. The story of an old trainer (Clint Eastwood) taking on a female boxer (Hillary Swank) delves into themes of forgiveness, faith and finding meaning in one's life. Although the film strikes a slightly false note in depicting her family, the film is superb in every aspect, especially the acting, writing and direction. It's 2004's best film (see right).

Finding Neverland (PG) portrays the Scottish playwright J.M. Barrie (Johnny Depp), whose most famous work, *Peter Pan* (1904), was born out of his longstanding relationship with the Llewelyn Davies family, particularly the family's five young boys. Despite its clichés and Depp's controlled, dispassionate performance, the film is beguiling and a tear-jerker.

Vera Drake (R) is a detailed look at a family in London in 1950 whose wife and mother, Vera (Imelda Staunton), is a saintly woman with endless energy whose only purpose seems to be serving others. When she is arrested for "helping young girls in trouble" by providing abortions, she goes almost mute with grief. The film tells a human story without politicizing. Staunton's performance is outstanding.

BEST FILMS OF 2004

1. **Million Dollar Baby**
2. **Maria Full of Grace**
3. **Before Sunset**
4. **Sideways**
5. **Hotel Rwanda**
6. **The Aviator**
7. **The Motorcycle Diaries**
8. **Vera Drake**
9. **The Incredibles**
10. **Touching the Void**

BOOKS

Deerflies by Jeff Gundy (WordTech Editions, 2004, $17) and **The Complete Tante Tina: Mennonite Blues and Recipes** by David Waltner-Toews (Pandora Press, 2004, $17 Cdn.) are two recent collections by well-known Mennonite poets. Gundy, who teaches at Bluffton (Ohio) University, offers wry observations that seem odd yet are honest and beautiful. Two poems have appeared in *The Mennonite*. Canadian Waltner-Toews' narrative poems draw on Russian and Mennonite history and deal with global politics, city girls and the celebration of Christmas. He includes recipes.

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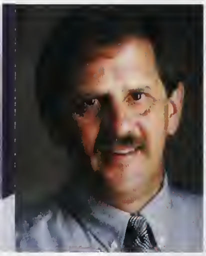

Everett J. Thomas

A decade on Damascus Road

Damascus Road, an initiative designed to address racism in the church, had its inception in Chicago 10 years ago at a conference called "Restoring Our Sight." Since then the movement has helped many of us recognize the white privilege we enjoy and made the term "antiracism" a part of many official church documents.

The goal of Damascus Road in Mennonite Church USA is to help our denomination move toward a multicultural and antiracist identity. But measuring the progress we have made as a denomination is difficult because Mennonite Church USA consists of groups and institutions at various places along the road.

On March 11-13, the broad network of Anabaptists who support Damascus Road's efforts will meet in Atlanta to review the past decade and plan for the next (see page 7). But as Mennonite Church USA continues to work at dismantling racism in the next decade, we will need to move beyond learning the language. We need to put in place a system that audits changes and establishes benchmarks for any progress we wish to claim.

We need a systemic approach because different groups are at different places on the journey toward the goal. The groups with the most distance to travel seem oblivious to their racism and the effects of white privilege. Other groups are farther down the Damascus Road, having worked at racial justice and diversity issues for years. But even members of such groups and institutions are challenged by the insidious forms racism takes as it mutates into new manifestations.

The more we get into it, the harder it gets because people finally have the courage to speak up. —Susan Mark Landis

Until an institution or group identifies its beginning place with honesty and humility, not much progress can be made. This also means that those in our denomination charged with dismantling racism cannot simply create one analysis that fits all groups and then write a curriculum.

Rather, each group interested in creating a truly multicultural, antiracist church must do the hard work of locating themselves on the road and committing to taking the next step along the way.

Damascus Road maintains at least two important principles associated with this journey. First, no group or institution can skip a stage in the transformation process. Second, moving from any one stage to the next is difficult and can be painful—no matter how advanced the stage.

The discouraging part of this work is that the more we work at dismantling racism, the more problems we uncover. Mennonite Church USA peace advocate Susan Mark Landis, a member of the Executive Board's antiracism team, recently explained why.

"The more we get into it," she said at last month's Executive Board meeting, "the harder it gets because [racial-ethnic] people finally have the courage to speak up. It is very hard."

The more we work at dismantling racism, the more those victimized by it begin to trust us—and then reveal more of how they experience our racism. They also ask for action. For example, Iglesia Menonita Hispana, the Mennonite Church USA associate group representing Hispanic congregations, has now formally requested "an investigation relating to the state of racism (systemic and institutional) in the Mennonite Church" and asked for "a dialogue with the agencies, conferences and other entities that are being affected by this issue."

Other developments also signify trouble. Mennonite Education Agency recently reported on the declining financial support for Racial Ethnic Leadership Education—a fund separate from MEA's budget but managed by the agency to provide scholarships for racial-ethnic students across the church. Is declining support for this fund the result of changing funding patterns caused by the formation of the new Mennonite Church USA? Or is it an indicator of an attitude change among us?

Until we know where we are on the road to being a truly multiethnic, antiracist church we will not be able to answer such questions easily. But there is no turning back. As we begin another decade of unpacking this sin in our midst, we can do so knowing that God's grace and wisdom is sufficient for us on the road that will help us recover our sight.—*ejt*

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Christ is Lord of every day

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I am fascinated by the issues that spark controversy among evangelical Christians. The sporadic flare-ups that draw a lot of attention for a time, then fade away. A recent one was the uproar over "keeping the Christ in Christmas." The controversy was energetic and heated. And just plain silly.

Think about it. How does one take the Christ out of Christmas? Given the name of the holiday, if nothing else, even the most secular person should be able to make the connection to somebody named Christ. Some worry about replacing the name with the letter X, as in Xmas. But X is the first letter in the Greek word for Christ. It seems Christ is not so easily replaced.

Who said Christ was in Christmas to begin with? Christ inhabits the hearts of believers. Christ's Spirit inhabits the church. Christ also is said to sit at God's right hand. And Christ, as Lord of heaven and earth, has the whole earth for his footstool. Our theology does not claim that Christ inhabits any day more than others. Christ is Lord of every day and to be honored every day.

The debate was fascinating, but what it reveals about us Christians is disturbing. Apparently the days when humility and generosity were Christian values are over. If such public debates are any indication, today's Christians are an angry bunch, demanding their rights even at the expense of the rights of others. This is a Christian nation, they say, so non-Christians better get used to it. The debate about Christmas has more to do with Christian entitlement and intolerance than it does with preserving some element essential to our faith.

There was a time when the Christmas debate revolved around the dangers of material excess. When Christians worried that Jesus was getting replaced by Santa and the Spirit of Christmas with the Spirit of Capitalism. The angel was at the top of the tree not out of reverence but to leave room under the tree for presents. But these concerns were not part of the current debate, which focused instead on a Christian's right to be greeted with the words Merry Christmas, not Happy Holidays.

The deeper question is, Is Christ in Christians?

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul lists the works "of the flesh." These are the things people do in response to their fallen nature, such as fornication, drunkenness and carousing. Most of us agree these are not acceptable behaviors within the body of Christ. Then Paul mentions strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions and envy. Again, most Christians agree that such should not characterize Christian conduct.

But when I consider the public behavior of many Christians, I have to wonder. The debate about Christmas may be silly on the surface, but what it reveals about our public behavior is serious. Strife, jealousy and anger are all too frequently the public faces of Christianity. The demand of our rights, the suppression of the rights of others, the my-way-or-the-highway spirit of our public discourse reveals just how "fleshly," how un-Christian, we've become.

I am not arguing against the right of Christians to be part of the public discourse. I am not arguing that we should not preserve and protect our traditions from being watered down. We have a responsibility to be engaged with the world in the pursuit of justice and peace. Our traditions are precious and meaningful.

I just wish we'd act more like people filled with Christ's Spirit. I wish that when people of other or no faith hear the word Christian, they'll think of someone like Jesus, someone bearing the fruit of that Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I wish the public face of the church were not angry, self-righteous and demanding but as gracious and compassionate as the Christ whose name we bear.

For this to happen, we should not let anything take the Christ out of us Christians.

TheMennonite

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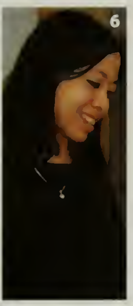

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Women in the pulpit

I welcome the occasion ("Women in the Pulpit," Jan. 18) to honor my predecessor pastor at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan. In the early 1980s, Eleanor Niemela Beachy, Hesston, Kan., with her late husband, Perry, gracefully and prophetically broke the ground of women-in-ministry terrain, assuring those who so sincerely questioned (and still question) the inclusion of female pastoral leadership. Eleanor made it easy for me to come to that same congregation in the mid-1990s, and subsequently for my successor, Lynn Elwood Schlosser, and her husband, Todd. Additionally I bear witness: Bergthal Mennonite Church gives seamless, nourishing care to its pastors. Eleanor and Perry, Lynn and Todd, and I also benefited from attentive leadership by then district conference ministers Frank Keller and (later) Marvin Zehr. Thanks be to God.*—Muriel T. Stackley, Kansas City, Kan.*

I appreciated Paul Schrag's article about Mennonite women pastors, but it was a little confusing to understand what segment of Mennonites and Anabaptists was being described. I first thought identifying the setting as North American—or more precisely, U.S. and Canada—Mennonites would be helpful. But then the list began to include Central and South American churches. There are Mennonite conferences in Brazil and certainly in other countries, too, that have women in pastoral ministry, including lead pastors. I was left feeling "fuzzy" about what was really being reported.*—E. Elaine Kauffman, Mountain Lake, Minn.*

Thanks for the article "Women in the Pulpit." The data was wonderful to see in print. My guess is that there may be some in more conservative denominations who—when they see it—may want to speed up their joining the 21st century. It is interesting that less conservative Mennonite denominations can see past 2,000-year-old writings on issues of this kind. My request now is that we take a deep breath and do the next step. As a denomination that is growing darker by the year, should we have some kind of idea about the number of African-American, Asian and Hispanic pastors we have in the pulpit?*—Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Fear of feeling

Re "A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite," Jan. 18): I was a neighbor of Martha Ann Burgard for two years until she moved back to Alabama. I am not a Mennonite. Martha Ann took me to her church and a home group every two weeks for two years. The people that Martha bad-mouthed in her article are gentle, caring, patient and loving people and deserve her respect and gratitude.
—R. Douglas, McGaheysville, Va.

In my experiences growing up as a Mennonite, I have felt nothing but compassion and love from my congregation. I don't believe that my congregation is just an aberration of an uncompassionate-toward-our-own Mennonite church either. The likelihood of getting a hug from the Mennonites that I've known is not "about as good as getting struck by lightning," as Burgard said. It's much greater than that. I've found that the Mennonite church is not afraid of feeling and shows much compassion toward everyone. I wish Burgard would give Mennonites another chance to prove that it is a church that cares about all its members, because in my life it most certainly has.*—Jenny Hochstetler, Iowa City, Iowa*

A small world?

In "An Ode to Walking" (Jan. 18), Layton Friesen presents a number of reasons why walking is more "godly" than other forms of travel. His points are well-made and drive readers to consider the pace of our lives overall. But I am concerned about his final comment, "My world becomes a small, human-sized world, and as such it is a world that can be reasonably appreciated, loved and tended by a human being. As a small, human-sized world it is a world for which I can take a reasonable amount of responsibility."

The "human-sized world" immediately around us is the one on which we have the most direct impact. However, when taken too far, a small-world view can cause us to dehumanize those people who happen to be outside our immediate scope. Instead of caring more for people, as Friesen is advocating,

IN THIS ISSUE

Access to health care is the challenge before Mennonite Church USA in 2005. Since November 2004 we have focused on this matter with a monthly column on page 30 written by members of the Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics (ACHE) and news reporting on the progress of the Health-Care Access Initiative—the only resolution that will be placed before delegates at Charlotte 2005 in July. In this issue we focus on the complexities surrounding the health-care situation in the United States and some ethical issues confronting a church wishing to respond with equity and justice. MHS Alliance writer Leslie Homer-Cattell surveys some of the leaders in our health-care facilities today (page 8), retired physician Willard S. Krabill confronts us with care-giving dilemmas (page 12) and MMA president Howard Brenneman writes: "We have all created the problems with the current health-care system. And we're all responsible for the outcome" (page 15).*—Editors* with a too-small worldview, we care less for those people who don't live next door to us, don't look like us or don't pray like us. We forget that there are people outside our "walking world" who mourn for their dead, laugh with their children, tend the world around them and who are loved by God.

While modern transportation certainly has its flaws, it has also let us care more for individuals outside our neighborhoods.—*Melissa Beidler, Kutztown, Pa.*

Muzzled people

Now that both the federal government and Kansas are actively working to put before the populace constitutional amendments defining marriage, and they touch profoundly on issues we must not name or discuss in our Mennonite Church USA agencies, conferences and periodicals, what are the rules of engagement, dialogue and discernment to be? Is our God too small, our alliances too frail, our faith too weak to deal with realities of such grave importance to everything we believe and cherish? Can God be praised by his muzzled people?—*Walt Friesen, Newton, Kan.*

Editor's note: Since 2000, The Mennonite *has had a moratorium on articles and letters from readers that address Mennonite Church USA's teaching position on sexual orientation and practice.*

Liberal like the world?

Colleges are becoming more liberal. Many colleges were at one time Bible schools or seminaries. Look at Harvard and Yale. Today they are liberal; they have practically no Bible. Americans and their schools and even many churches have put the Bible out. What is left? The question is, Are we becoming liberal like the world? Are we secure in our faith? How do we find security in Christ? John 3:16 basically says: Trust and obey Jesus Christ; there is no other way to be happy and fruitful. There is much false security in the churches, in America and in the world today. We have a lukewarm church today.—*Wayne Kratzer, Kidron, Ohio*

False Bibles?

In the 1611 King James Version Bibles there are words in italics throughout the text. The older KJV Bibles explain in the title page that the translators added those words because in the English language there may be instances where the words needed to be added. However there is no mention of this fact in any recent printing of the Bible. Recent versions don't even distinguish between what was directly translated and what was added by translators. There is a difference between translation and interpretation. These added interpretations are the roots of church-and-state separation, false piety and other errors that have devastated so many lives and influence current government policies. When you're reading the translation, remove the words in italics and see for yourself if it changes the text. I'm sure you'll be surprised to see where the Scripture changes to a more practical, sensible and acceptable understanding.—*Greg Thompson, Waianae, Hawaii*

Spirit world ignored in North America

In "Meserete Kristos Church Now One of the Largest in Mennonite World Conference" (Jan. 4), an Ethiopian Mennonite Church leader says that deliverance from evil spirits was a central part of church life. It is ironic that the spirit world is central in Africa but it is ignored here in North America.

I'm aware that the time-honored way to address Ephesians 6:12 is to call the "principalities and powers" the corporations and political parties. In reality, Paul was addressing the spirit world that motivates people who may be at the helm of those entities. Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us to wear spiritual armor and be part of a wrestling match. Why?

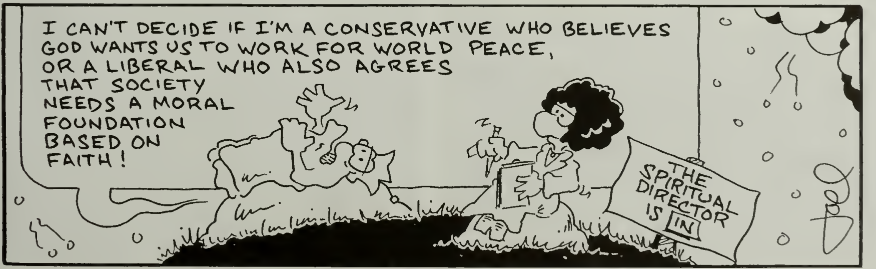
About one-third of what Mark records in his Gospel shows Jesus dealing with evil spirits. Contemporary experience among those of us who see the demonic possibility and encounter it find what Jesus, the disciples, Paul and the early church did. Our African brothers are saying the same thing.—*Dean Hochstetler, Nappanee, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

In Mennonite Church USA, the antiracism program Damascus Road has:

- ○ Changed the church for the better (31%)
- ○ Changed the church for the worse (10%)
- ○ Not sure whether it has helped or hurt (35%)
- ○ I don't know anything about Damascus Road (24%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org


I CAN'T DECIDE IF I'M A CONSERVATIVE WHO BELIEVES GOD WANTS US TO WORK FOR WORLD PEACE, OR A LIBERAL WHO ALSO AGREES THAT SOCIETY NEEDS A MORAL FOUNDATION BASED ON FAITH!
THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR IS IN

IN BRIEF

EMU prof to receive award

Moira R. Rogers, an associate professor of Spanish at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., will receive a BMW Award for Intercultural Learning for her project "International Construction Camp: Building Blocks for Peaceful Living in the 21st Century," published as "Active Peacebuilding from below. Intercultural Learning in Construction Camps. A Study." From July 2003 to August 2004, Rogers worked as an intercultural consultant for the Institute for Youth and Society, a research branch of the Reichenberg (Germany) Fellowship, an intentional, ecumenical community.—*Eastern Mennonite University*

Matthew 25 today

In a letter to the editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, a reader wrote: "I was sick and you privatized medicine; I was homeless and you built sports stadiums; I was thirsty and you polluted the lakes; I was hungry and you gave control of the food chain to multinational corporations."—*The Christian Century*

MCC response grows to more than $12 million

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) response to the Asia earthquake has grown to more than $12 million for relief, trauma counseling, village reconstruction and economic development.

The total includes funds for efforts in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, as well as some $100,000 for a project to restore fishing villages in Somalia.

Proposed efforts include rebuilding three villages in Sri Lanka entirely—providing housing, household supplies, clinics, schools and income generation aid to help families resume the fishing and agriculture they depend on for their livelihoods.—*MCC News Service*

Vietnam prime minister issues statement

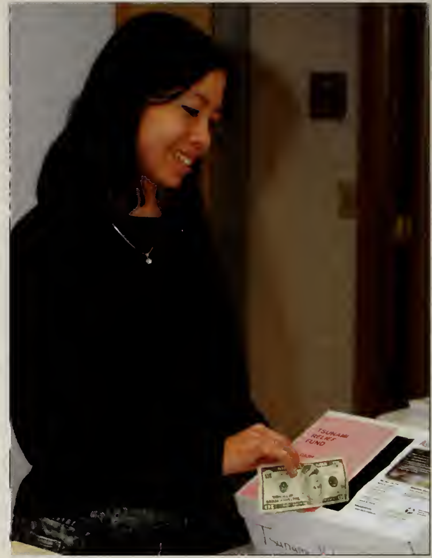
HANOI, Vietnam—Prime Minister Phan Van Khai issued an executive order on Feb. 4 that may give Protestant Christians greater freedom.

The instructions focused particularly on several hundred thousand Christian communities among the ethnic minorities, primarily in the inland mountainous areas. Several thousand of these Christians in a few dozen communities are related to the Vietnam Mennonite Church.

Under the new directions, the prime minister said they should be "guided to practice their religion at home" and permitted to acquire a place in their village to meet when needed. If they meet as a congregation, the local authorities are to create favorable conditions for them to carry out their religious activities.

The authorities are also instructed to assist those who want to return to their traditional beliefs.

In the highlands of central Vietnam, the statement said, the government would recognize more congregations of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam. When the ECVN was formally granted legal status in 2001, several hundred congregations of ethnic minority Christians were not recognized by the government and subsequently closed. In the past two years about 20 congregations have been organized, and the ECVN has been authorized to open a seminary in the highlands.—*Mennonite World Conference*



Jodi H. Beyeler

Goshen students raise money for tsunami relief

Myra Karina, a Goshen (Ind.) College junior communication major from Indonesia, donates money into one of the boxes set up around campus for collecting tsunami relief donations during January. She helped organize the tsunami relief on campus, which raised more than $10,000.—*Goshen College*

Linda Shelly

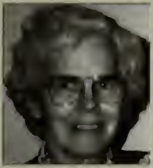
Worship joins Southern Cone Mennonites in Brazil

On Jan. 23, World Fellowship Sunday, people from Mennonite churches in Curitiba, Brazil, worship with some of the Cono Sur (Mennonite churches of Southern South America) participants. Delegates from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay celebrated the 12th Southern Cone Anabaptist-Mennonite Congress, Jan. 19-23, in Curitiba. In three sessions, Ruben Driedger of Uruguay addressed how to do mission in today's postmodern times. The next congress will be in Uruguay in 2007.—*Mennonite World Conference*

India mission worker Giesbrecht dies at 79

NEWTON, Kan.—Dorothy Giesbrecht, 79, who spent 26 years as a mission worker in India with a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network, died Feb. 4 in Abbotsford, B.C.

She went to India as a nurse in 1951 with the Commission on Overseas Mission. A year later she married Jacob Giesbrecht, who joined her in India. Together they served there for 25 years, where his responsibility was with evangelistic work in rural



Dorothy Giesbrecht

areas. They left India in 1977. In 1986, she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

She was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, on Dec. 28, 1925, to Hilda and Henry Andres. A memorial service was held at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church on Feb. 11.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Israeli settlers attack peace workers

AT-TUWANI, West Bank—At 11 a.m. on Feb. 17, while Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) member Dianna Zimmerman and an Operation Dove (OD) team member accompanied shepherds on the shepherds' own land, two settlers accosted them. They were above At-Tuwani, near the Ma'on Israeli Settler Outpost. One settler stood with his gun aimed at Zimmerman while she engaged the other in dialogue. When the army came, the settlers left.

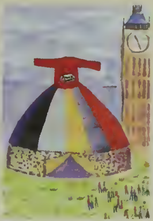
A short time later, CPT member Sally Hunsberger and two OD members appeared over the crest of the hill from the direction of the village of Tuba. Settlers reappeared, noticed the video camera a team member carried and attacked the two OD team members. One was admitted to hospital with a head injury from the karate chop to his head. He has short-term memory loss and blurred vision. The injuries of the second person seemed less severe, but CPT members do not know their current status. Hunsberger, who witnessed the attack, was not injured.—*CPT*

ast meets west in London, England

ethel College, North Newton, Kan., students from a diversity of isciplines in January toured sites in England, Germany and rance important to the history of math and psychology. Among any stops were Cambridge, the Freud Museum in London, the ewish Museum in Berlin and the Louvre in Paris. Above, the roup stands on the Prime Meridian (dividing line between the estern and Eastern hemispheres) at the Royal Observatory in ondon.—*Bethel College*

Big dress speaks loudly for justice

LONDON—Tim Nafziger and Charletta Erb, who represent Mennonite Mission Network, participated in the Big Dress campaign, planned by Speak, a United Kingdom Christian network of students and young adults campaigning and praying about issues of global injustice. On Feb. 21, organizers planned to unveil the world's largest dress, a two-story creation with a skirt 20 meters wide made of about 10,000 fabric squares, sewn by people from across England as a petition expressing concerns and prayers over trade injustices, particularly in the garment industry, that cause global poverty.



Speak focuses on social issues as part of its evangelistic mission toward young people, primarily on college campuses across England. The organization began when a number of university students realized that there were plenty of Christian groups on campus and plenty of peace groups, but no groups combined both interests.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

'False gospel' on environment challenged

WASHINGTON—In an effort to refute what they call a "false gospel" and change destructive attitudes and actions concerning the environment, a group of theologians convened by the National Council of Churches USA released an open letter Feb. 14 calling on Christians to repent of "our social and ecological sins" and reject teachings that suggest humans are called to exploit the Earth without care for how our behavior impacts the rest of God's creation.

"God's Earth Is Sacred: An Open Letter to Church and Society in the United States" states there is both an environmental and a theological crisis that must be addressed.

"We have listened to a false gospel that we continue to live out in our daily habits—a gospel that proclaims that God cares for the salvation of humans only and that our human calling is to exploit Earth for our own ends alone," says the statement.

The statement calls Christians to "repent of our sins, in the presence of God and one another" and pursue, "with God's help, a path different from our present course." See www.ecojustice.org.
—*National Council of Churches USA*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

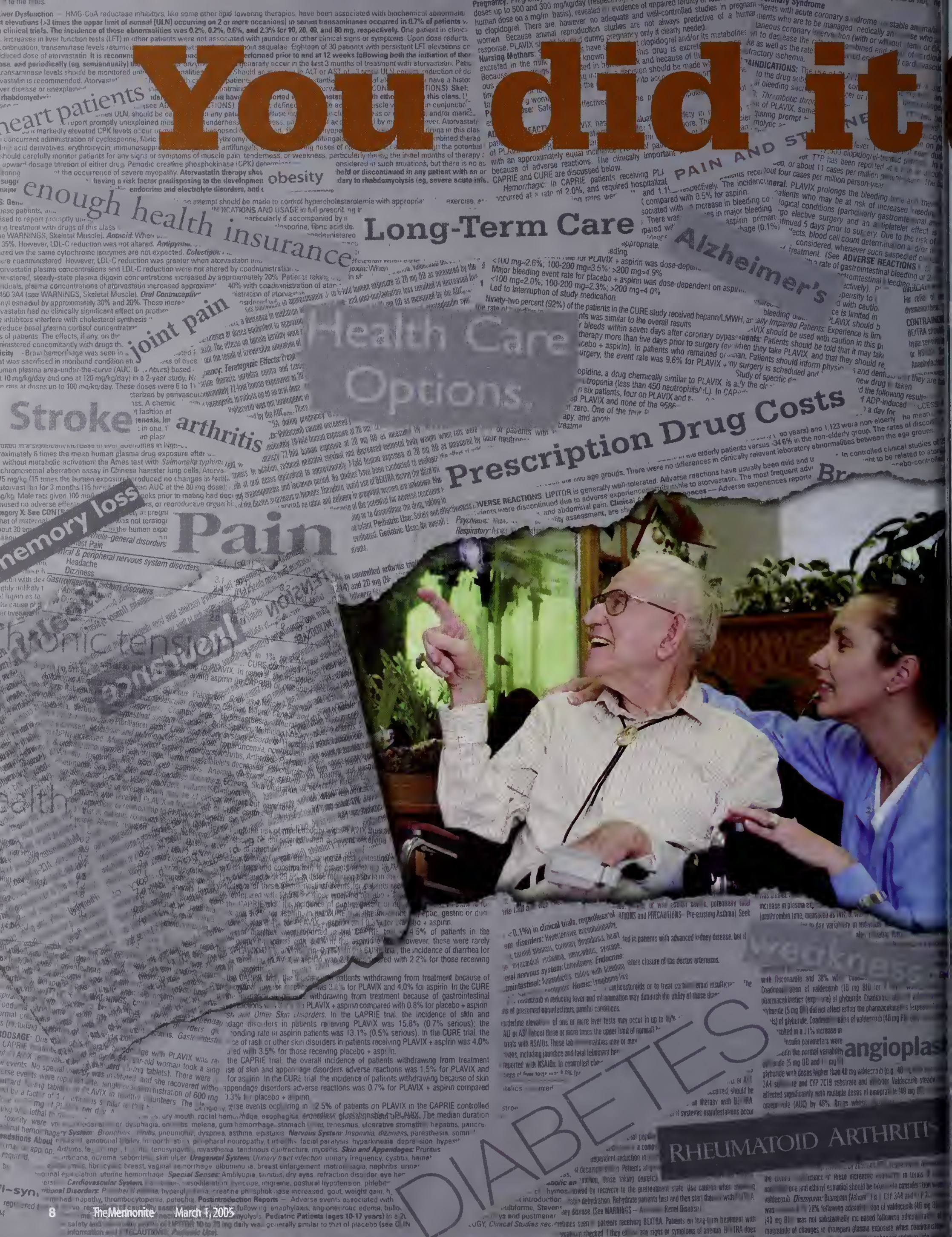
Mayors call for abolition of nuclear weapons

The mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, are asking mayors all over the world to call for negotiations to begin on a treaty for the elimination of nuclear weapons by 2020. The United Nations will hold a conference on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in May. Abolition Now! (www.abolition-now.org) plans to bring to the conference a delegation of mayors (600 so far, 60 from the United States) who have called for the elimination of nuclear weapons. —*Yes!*

Nun questions least, most livable

A Japanese nun who has served about 25 years in a country that, according to the United Nations, is the world's least livable, says her own country has lost the joy of living. Negishi Michiko, 65, was the first Japanese missionary nun to serve in Sierra Leone, which was ranked the "least livable" country by the 2004 U.N. Human Development Index. The same index ranks Japan the world's ninth "most livable" country. She says, "Humans grow by overcoming sorrow and pain," while "Japan is taking 'drugs' such as ease, convenience and comfort." Forced out of Sierra Leone in 1998 by a civil war in which 50,000 people died, Negishi returned in 2002. —*National Catholic Reporter*

You did it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to . . . these

We are called to serve those Jesus talked about in Matthew 25.

by Leslie Homer-Cattell

And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."—Matthew 25:40

My grandmother had a wicked sweet tooth and made a mean vegetable beef soup. She laughed easily and wore her hair swept up in a Gibson girl roll. Just 10-years-old when her family emigrated from Scotland, Gram dropped out of school after eighth grade. She worked as a maid before marrying a hotel clerk. She and my grandfather—who struggled with alcoholism—had three children and a rocky life together.

Gram became a Christian at age 28, and from then on her life was the church. Her week's schedule revolved around Sunday morning and evening services, Wednesday night prayer meetings and Thursday morning Bible studies. She spoke to God many times each day, praying for guidance in all aspects of her life.

God spoke to her, too. He said things like, Tell that young woman over there about my love for her. And, Bring that lonely, frail gentleman home for dinner with your family. And Gram did.

When the local state hospital closed, Gram heard God say, Take them in. At the age of 62 she opened a group home for people with mental illness and developmental disabilities. Betty Jean, Mary Jane and Jeannie moved in. Louise, a frail, retired teacher with no family, and Gram's 92-year-old father-in-law moved in, too. Over the next eight years they and others ate her good cooking and witnessed a Christian faith filled with joy.

Eventually Gram's declining health meant her homemaking days were over. She lived mostly with her son during her last years.

But when family problems left her temporarily without a place to stay, Tel Hai Retirement Community—located in Honey Brook, Pa., and founded by members of Conestoga Mennonite Church and Maple Grove Mennonite Church—opened its doors. For about one-third of her $581 monthly social security check, she lived for several months in a small vacant cottage.

When the local state hospital closed, Gram heard God say, Take them in. At the age of 62 she opened a group home for people with mental illness and developmental disabilities.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Serving Jesus in an upside-down way: After a lifetime of Christian compassion for people in need of love, care and a home, Gram was the one in need. Tel Hai's response is one example of serving those Jesus talks about in Matthew 25.

“The king in Jesus' parable gives his subjects a most unusual command—to serve him by serving ‘the least of these.’ This turned upside down contemporary notions of power and privilege,” says Rick Stiffney, president of Mennonite Health Services (MHS) Alliance. “But Jesus was only challenging his followers to do what he had done—serve the sick, the lonely, the poor. They did just that.

“For nearly 500 years Anabaptists have also taken Jesus' parable seriously,” he adds. “And the tradition continues today through the more than 70 Mennonite-related health and human service providers that belong to MHS Alliance and serve more than 89,000 seniors, adults, troubled children and youth every year. Board and staff leaders of these organizations are committed to being faithful to Jesus' upside-down way of serving—despite the real world challenges that they face every day.”

The poor, the frail elderly and those with developmental disabilities or mental illnesses too often fall through the cracks in our health-care system.—Ken Brubaker

Ken Brubaker is passionate about Jesus' call to serve those society sees as “the least of these.” He finds concrete expression of this call as a physician, as a medical director at several nursing homes—including the local county facility—and as a board member at Landis Homes Retirement Community in Lititz, Pa. He also serves on the board of MHS Alliance.

“The Matthew 25 story of the sheep and the goats is my favorite passage,” Ken says. “It motivates me to participate in health care, particularly in areas with more need. The poor, the frail elderly and those with developmental disabilities or mental illnesses too often fall through the cracks in our health-care system. My theology is such that I believe it is really important that committed Christians reach out to meet this kind of human need in our society.”

Adriel, Inc.

Real world challenges: Karen Litwiller, executive director of Oregon Mennonite Residential Services, knows something about meeting human need. Most of the developmentally disabled men and women who live in OMRS' seven group homes came out of institutional settings. Many are nonverbal and need significant assistance with activities of daily living from round-the-clock staff. But their only source of income is disability. Most have incomes less than 30 percent of Oregon's median income for a household of one.

“Operations are difficult,” says Karen. “We spend a lot of time fund-raising. Grant money has helped us eliminate debt service on our houses—that's how we've kept going these last few years.”

Karen, who has worked in child welfare, low-income senior housing and nursing homes, also feels an obligation to the 70 employees who care for OMRS' 35 residents.

“Because of our reimbursement rate, we are limited in what we can pay staff,” she says. “Yet we have some awesome staff who stay with us in spite of what we pay. But how can people come to work and do their jobs well if their lives are in turmoil about how to make the next rent payment and how to find good, affordable child care?”

Serving people of all means: In Glendale, Ariz., Glencroft Retirement Community also struggles to recruit, pay and retain good staff. A continuing care retirement community, Glencroft serves 900 residents, 100 in government-subsidized apartments for low-income seniors. Seventy percent of Glencroft's skilled nursing residents are on Medicaid.

“Hospitals recruit nurses by offering thousands of dollars of sign-on bonuses and scholarships for advanced degrees. We don't have those kinds of resources," says President Jay Shetler, who says being an administrator in a church-related organization today takes a special calling and a lot of business savvy.

Attracting private-pay residents who help ensure that nonprofits like Glencroft can financially survive is also a daunting challenge, Jay says.

"We are in a hyper-competitive market with an over supply of nursing-home beds and assisted-living units. And unfunded regulatory mandates, increasing consumer expectations and low reimbursement rates result in a challenging environment.

"But local hospitals are converting to all private rooms, gourmet menus, in-house spas and the latest high-tech equipment," he says. "While third-party payers are footing the bill in acute-care hospitals, individuals have to shoulder nursing-home costs out-of-pocket until their resources are exhausted and they are eligible for Medicaid. The consumer perception is that nursing-home care is expensive. In reality, it is a bargain."

Hard questions, new approaches: Thirty-three years ago, Harold Loewen left a position at a Fortune 500 company to join the staff of Oaklawn in Goshen, Ind. He quickly learned that providing mental health services also means dealing with limited means.

"We're at the bottom of the priority deck when it comes to funding," says Harold, who is Oaklawn's chief executive. "Mental illness is not seen as favorably as cancer and heart disease. There is a real resource distribution issue.

"Most people with a debilitating mental illness can function outside the hospital most of the time," he says. "But they need support services to help them through the maze of life. How do we give them sufficient access to the psychiatrists, nurses and case managers they need? Can we connect with families, churches and the community to share the burden?"

Harold says finding the right model to ensure sufficient access to appropriate services is the challenge. And he raises some hard questions.

"When we think of access, our minds go to insurance, but I'm not sure that's the whole equation. Are we really healthier than if we spent less on health care? Are we Mennonites—known for emphasizing community—shifting our focus to an individual's right to all the latest medical technology?" he says.

How do Mennonites in health care begin to address these questions? Harold points to the past and the future.

"We need to remember the history that got us into this work—state hospitals were atrocious, and we decided to try to give it a better shot," he says. "We've done that, but we need to look at how to continually improve our services, not just survive. The next generation will discover new ways to care for people in need. They'll experiment and challenge old ways. They'll make mistakes; but they will learn from them."

Are we Mennonites—known for emphasizing community—shifting our focus to an individual's right to all the latest medical technology?—Harold Loewen

If I could talk to my grandmother today, I'd tell her what a powerful influence she has been in my life. Her relationship with God helped shape and deepen my faith.

And I'd tell her that God is still talking to us down here. We're still trying to listen, and when it comes to caring for "the least of these," we're still trying to be faithful.

Leslie Homer-Cattell lives in Honey Brook, Pa.

Mennonite Nurses Association

Care-giving

ACHE

Anabaptist-related retirement communities face difficult ethical challenges.

by Willard S. Krabill

Not-for-profit, Anabaptist-related, retirement communities that are committed to living out Anabaptist values in their care of residents face difficult ethical challenges. How do we honor our residents' autonomy when a needed transfer to a higher level of care is adamantly resisted, either by the resident or the family or both—for emotional, social or financial reasons? What amount of risk do we allow the resident to assume regarding self-care versus facility (and community) well-being? How do we manifest the love of Christ in situations where much persuasion, if not compulsion, is called for? And how do we enhance our Christian identity and integrity in today's market-driven health-care world and in our secularist-oriented bioethics environment?

> How do we enhance our Christian identity and integrity in today's market-driven health-care world and in our secularist-oriented bioethics environment?

Jesus' words in John 21:18 seem prescient: "When you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go."

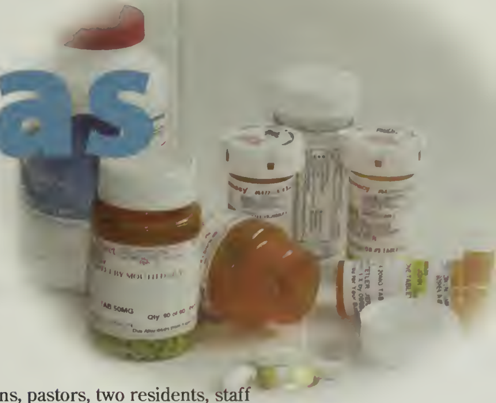
A 92-year-old resident in an independent living apartment is becoming increasingly confused, is careless in hygiene, has memory loss and has been incurring multiple dents on their car. The spouse, alert but frail, admits to great uneasiness about riding in the car with the resident. There are no children or nearby relatives. Approached by the staff, their physician declines reporting this unsafe driver to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, citing physician-patient confidentiality. The BMV is not helpful. If an aged individual can read line #5 on the eye chart, driver's license renewal is typically granted without a driving test. The retirement community accepts a commitment to the safety of both its residents and the wider community. It is also committed to the independence and contentment of its elderly residents for as long as possible. How should we respond to this safety dilemma?

A resident couple, known to be wealthy, is in need of nursing home care. Whereas they were "private pay" residents in their independent living apartment, they have now transferred their assets to their children and come to the office applying for Medicaid-subsidized beds in the nursing center. Medicaid inadequately reimburses for care, thus the nursing center loses money on Medicaid residents. The "private pay" residents and U.S. taxpayers are now forced to subsidize the care of this (formerly?) wealthy couple. Such divesting of assets is legal, but is it ethical? What policy should the nursing center follow in responding to this couple's request? How should an Anabaptist-related institution deal with such injustice when the legal and ethical perspectives are in conflict?

A resident in the nursing center, clearly on the dying trajectory, develops fever, cough and delirium. Her living will has been in place for several years, and her desire to "go home and be with the Lord" has been voiced to the staff repeatedly. However, an "on call" physician who doesn't know this person or her wishes, transfers her to the hospital for intensive care. He also mistakenly believes that such life-sustaining measures, once started, cannot ethically be withdrawn. Later, the resident returns to the nursing center with a nasogastric feeding tube in place. The resident pulls it out. The family wants it replaced, against the wishes of the patient as expressed to the staff. Question: Is the patient competent, having the capacity to overrule the family? Who decides?

A resident in an independent-living apartment falls frequently, then phones neighbors in nearby apartments at all hours, day and night, for assistance in getting up. The neighbors object to this

dilemmas



imposition and the responsibility, but this fiercely independent resident adamantly refuses transfer to assisted living.

A grieving family is working through the emotional trauma of having placed a loved parent "in a facility." A sense of guilt seems to be driving them to be demanding and highly critical of the nursing staff. Meanwhile the parent's dementia is advancing and, due to the disease, becomes belligerent, foul-mouthed and threatens other residents. Should this family be asked to transfer the resident to another institution—and seek legal authority to do so if the request is refused?

All these examples are familiar to staff members of our Anabaptist retirement communities and health-care (nursing center) facilities. Our faith orientation does not immunize us against the difficult, nitty-gritty dilemmas we face in caring for our elderly brothers and sisters. These examples are also typical of the kinds of cases brought to the Greencroft Ethics Committee for review.

Sometimes the review stimulates us to develop a new institutional ethics policy. Sometimes the attorney member of our committee helpfully informs us of a legal option that fits our faith community's ethical framework and helps resolve the dilemma. Sometimes the review simply affirms the staff in the course they have been following. And sometimes the review of the issue at hand becomes a topic we address in a community-wide educational event. For example, a recent Family Forum focused on the emotional, spiritual and public safety aspects of relinquishing driving privileges.

The above paragraph illustrates how one of the ethics committee mandates from the governing board, that of case review, relates to our other three mandates: policy development and review; education (of staff and community) and serving as the institutional conscience (organizational ethics). This requires understanding what it means for Greencroft to have moral commitments and ways to fulfill them.

To fulfill our charge, the board appointed 13 people to the ethics committee: a board representative, nurses, physicians, pastors, two residents, staff administrators and an attorney who is not, and should not be, the institution's legal counsel. It is a requirement of our charter that the nonstaff members outnumber the staff representatives. All are committed, compassionate Christians, almost all Mennonite or Brethren church members and committed to applying our faith perspective to the ethical dilemmas in today's health-care environment—not an easy task.

More than 20 policies have been developed since the ethics committee was reborn in 1997, addressing a broad range of issues such as advance directives, use of restraints, pain management, artificially provided nutrition, end-of-life care, Medicaid wait list and determination of competence and capacity.

Our faith orientation does not immunize us against the difficult, nitty-gritty dilemmas we face in caring for our elderly brothers and sisters.

The task of an ethics committee is not always to provide the right answers to ethical dilemmas but to ask the right questions. In doing so we are helping translate our core Anabaptist values into daily decisions. Number one on the list of Greencroft's values statement is, "Christian compassion—demonstrating grace, mercy and tender love for all in our care." The ethics committee provides a multidisciplinary forum where those values, and the right questions, can be examined and applied.

The Greencroft mission statement includes a commitment to "maintaining a Christian emphasis in all its endeavors." The ethics committee is a vital part of fulfilling that commitment.

Willard S. Krabill is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Barriers to access to long-term care

Services, finances and emotions

by Ada Hallman

The issue of access to long-term care can be framed in terms of services, finances and emotions. Perhaps the greatest barrier to access is the lack of understanding surrounding a confusing range of services and settings intended to help chronically disabled people for a prolonged period of time. These primarily low-tech services are designed to rehabilitate or compensate for loss of physical or mental functioning and are provided in a broad range of settings: the home, for community-based services; assisted-living facilities; adult day services programs; and nursing homes. Add to the decision-making matrix the availability (or lack) of informal support of family members and friends.

Another barrier is the reimbursement system, a complex patchwork of funds from federal, state and local levels and one's personal resources. Elders are often unprepared for the costs of long-term care because they believe Medicare will cover them. The reality is that Medicare primarily covers acute-care costs with only short-term coverage for home care or care in nursing homes following hospitalization. Primary payment for long-term care in any of these settings is the recipient's private funds and Medicaid, the federal/state health insurance program for the poor. This is the major public program covering long-term care for the elderly and disabled people of all ages. This source of funding is an important safety net for those who through life circumstances qualify as needy. It also covers those who legitimately deplete their resources through the process of payment for care. Medicaid also covers people of means who have intentionally sheltered their assets in order to qualify for these taxpayer-supported funds, straining an already burdened system.

The challenge for all of us as good stewards is to balance fiscal responsibility with available resources.

The emotional barrier for consumers sometimes includes guilt for family members involved in placement. For the individuals needing services and for their families, anger and depression may surround the loss of independence and resources.

From the provider perspective, our mission includes the provision of services as needed by each individual, regardless of payment source. This includes determining what proportion of Medicaid-eligible recipients can be supported at any given time, as the reimbursement from Medicaid is less than the cost of care provided. For most faith-based communities, this shortfall ranges from $50 to $100 per day, per recipient, creating another barrier to access when the proportion of Medicaid recipients prevents providers from accepting yet another person without private resources. The challenge for all of us as good stewards is to balance fiscal responsibility with available resources.

Ada Hallman is chief operations officer at Rockhill Mennonite Community in Sellersville, Pa.

Sunnyside Village

What is driving the health-care access issue that our denomination will consider at Charlotte 2005?

The choices we make, the values we hold

Prescription Drug Costs

by Howard L. Brenneman

The number of people without access to health-care financing—and thus access to health care—has grown in the last few years. For most people this is because they or their employer cannot afford health insurance. And the cost of health insurance has increased more than 10 percent on average each year over the last five years.

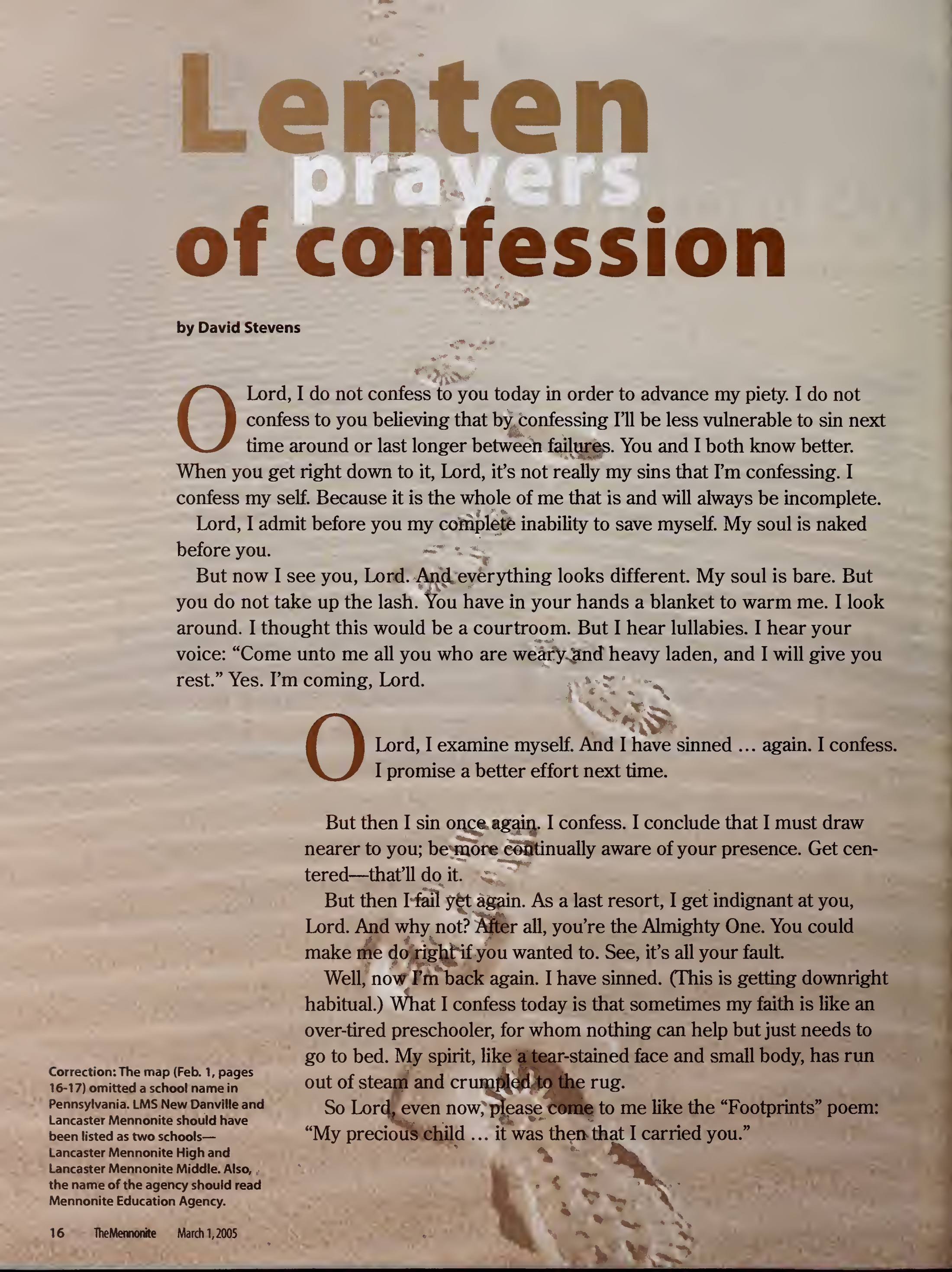
Why are health-insurance costs increasing so quickly? It's a combination of factors, including increases in medical technology and our expectations that if treatment is available we are entitled to it.

The range of illnesses and conditions we can treat nowadays is so much broader than a few decades ago. In the past, a heart attack was often fatal; today more people survive heart attacks and go on to need expensive medication. In the past, babies who were born too early did not survive; today we keep them alive on monitors for months. Sometimes they go on to thrive; other times, depending on their size, they may have ongoing, serious health problems for the rest of their lives. And these are only two of the more costly medical areas that affect the cost of health care and insurance.

From MMA's perspective, we—you, me, physicians, prescription drug companies and hospitals—have all created the problems with the current health-care system. And we're all responsible for the outcome. We've all helped drive up the costs, whether deliberately or not. We can decide whether we receive enough value to pay for the increased cost or if we want to take responsibility to bring the costs down.

We—you, me, physicians, prescription drug companies and hospitals—have all created the problems with the current health-care system.

Howard L. Brenneman is president of MMA.



Lenten prayers of confession

by David Stevens

O Lord, I do not confess to you today in order to advance my piety. I do not confess to you believing that by confessing I'll be less vulnerable to sin next time around or last longer between failures. You and I both know better. When you get right down to it, Lord, it's not really my sins that I'm confessing. I confess my self. Because it is the whole of me that is and will always be incomplete.

Lord, I admit before you my complete inability to save myself. My soul is naked before you.

But now I see you, Lord. And everything looks different. My soul is bare. But you do not take up the lash. You have in your hands a blanket to warm me. I look around. I thought this would be a courtroom. But I hear lullabies. I hear your voice: "Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Yes. I'm coming, Lord.

O Lord, I examine myself. And I have sinned … again. I confess. I promise a better effort next time.

But then I sin once again. I confess. I conclude that I must draw nearer to you; be more continually aware of your presence. Get centered—that'll do it.

But then I fail yet again. As a last resort, I get indignant at you, Lord. And why not? After all, you're the Almighty One. You could make me do right if you wanted to. See, it's all your fault.

Well, now I'm back again. I have sinned. (This is getting downright habitual.) What I confess today is that sometimes my faith is like an over-tired preschooler, for whom nothing can help but just needs to go to bed. My spirit, like a tear-stained face and small body, has run out of steam and crumpled to the rug.

So Lord, even now, please come to me like the "Footprints" poem: "My precious child … it was then that I carried you."

Correction: The map (Feb. 1, pages 16-17) omitted a school name in Pennsylvania. LMS New Danville and Lancaster Mennonite should have been listed as two schools—Lancaster Mennonite High and Lancaster Mennonite Middle. Also, the name of the agency should read Mennonite Education Agency.

Mennonite Health Services Alliance
234 South Main Street, Suite 1
Goshen, IN 46526

MHS Alliance

CONNECTIONS

HUMAN DIGNITY

Full of Joy, Obedient to Jesus' teachings

LaDene Lehman says caring for people is just something her family likes to do!

"To me, it's a calling," says LaDene, a nurse of over 30 years who has served as director of nursing at **Swiss Village** in Berne, Indiana for the past 20. She is passionate about respecting residents' human dignity.

"An elder is a person who is still growing, a person with potential and a life with promise in connection to the future," she says. "Residents deserve our respect and honor. We communicate that through body language, eye contact, a gentle touch and a smile—universal language that lets them know they are human beings worthy of our time and love."

One of LaDene's favorite verses is Matthew 25:40— ". . . whatever you did for. . these. . ., you did for me." As a nurse she tries to treat others as Jesus did and finds joy in this act of obedience to his teachings.

"Nursing is an absolute privilege for me!" says LaDene. "Residents entrust us with their lives and what we give them goes beyond knowledge, skill and training. We give of ourselves."

LaDene Lehman

MHS Alliance is a community of more than 70 Anabaptist-related health and human service ministries committed to God's work of healing and hope in Christ Jesus. Members serve more than 75,000 seniors, adults, youth and children each year.

MHS Alliance members covenant with each other and their founding denominations to demonstrate shared values in daily ministry to those they serve, including:

- Human dignity
- Justice for the vulnerable
- Community, mutuality and service
- Ethical practices
- Peace and reconciliation
- Spiritual care
- Stewardship of God's gifts

MHS ALLIANCE MEMBERS

Arizona
- Glencroft Retirement Community

California
- California Central Mennonite Residential Services
- Kings View
- Lincoln Glen Manor
- Palm Village
- Sierra View Homes

Colorado
- Casa del Sol

Florida
- Sunnyside Village

Illinois
- Brementowne Manor
- Maple Lawn Homes
- Meadows Mennonite Retirement Community

Indiana
- Agape Respite Care
- Friendship Haven
- Greencroft Retirement Communities
- MDC Goldenrod
- Oaklawn
- Southfield Village
- Swiss Village

Iowa
- Pleasantview Home

Kansas
- Bethesda Home
- Garden Valley Retirement Village
- Kidron Bethel Village
- Mennonite Health Resources
- Mennonite Manor
- Parkside Homes, Inc.
- Prairie View, Inc.
- Schowalter Villa
- Sunshine Meadows Retirement Community

Maryland
- Brook Lane Health Services
- Jubilee Association of Maryland

Michigan
- Community Caring
- Thurston Woods Village

Missouri
- Beth Haven Nursing Home

Bob Kauffman

JUSTICE

Meeting a Real Need

They call him "Bob Hope"—Bob **"Hope Village"** Kauffman, that is! He currently serves as project manager and treasurer of the board of directors, but Bob was board president when the development of this retirement community in Canby, Oregon began in 1996.

"It has been a rewarding project because it helps seniors," says Bob. "If you can age in one place, it is not as traumatic as if you are suddenly in need of care and don't know anybody. Here you are familiar with your surroundings and you can remain among friends. It's an easier adjustment to make."

Hope Village's campus includes a range of options, from independent living to assisted living and nursing care. Two apartment buildings provide affordable housing for low-income seniors.

"When we did a market study, we found out there is a real need for apartments for those living just on social security," says Bob. "In our area there was a need for 500 units like that and we were only building 50! They filled up in just a few months so we decided to build another 50 units.

"This has been a really rewarding experience for me," he adds. "People accuse me of being a workaholic, but I thoroughly enjoy it! My experience is you always get back more than what you give."

COMMUNITY, MUTUALITY & SERVICE

Reaching Beyond Ourselves

Jim Smith

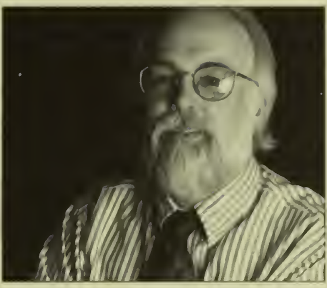
Learning to Soar: God Helps Us Rise Above Challenges was the theme of this year's Project Promise retreat sponsored by **MDC Goldenrod** (Goshen, Indiana), a Mennonite-related provider of residential services to those with developmental disabilities. It's a topic that Jim Smith—who volunteered as resource person—knows something about.

"I'm in a wheelchair due to a spinal cord injury," explains Jim, who pastored for 16 years at Hopedale Mennonite Church in Illinois and now works for MMA as manager of Church Relations. "I enjoy the opportunity to work with families dealing with the needs of those with handicaps."

Using power point, flannel graph, stories and songs, Jim talked about how God walks with us throughout our life experiences. He invited the participants, family members and volunteers at the retreat to reflect on and share their own journeys with one another.

"Everybody has challenges. When we approach those challenges with faith and hope and Christ in our lives, all of a sudden we have the ability to reach beyond ourselves," says Jim. "Project Promise was a lot of fun! The group was very warm and open; it was my privilege developing relationships with new brothers and sisters with developmental disabilities."

ETHICAL PRACTICES
Values Matter


John Martin

As executive director of **Sunshine, Inc.,** John Martin believes he is accountable to the teachings of Jesus and to the church. He has demonstrated this conviction for over 20 years with this Maumee, Ohio organization whose 600 employees serve 300 people with developmental disabilities in vocational settings, group homes, medically fragile residential and day programs, and in the community.

"From the beginning I was impressed with the vision, board and staff of Sunshine; its Mennonite-related values appealed to me," he says. "If an organization is not grounded in something larger, its values can change over time. I liked Sunshine's faith-based connection and the board members they attracted as a church-related not-for-profit."

For John, translating Sunshine's values into operations begins with the ethical treatment of staff. He participates in over 30 employee meetings each year, reviewing funding and getting the feedback of staff regarding compensation, budgeting and other issues. Sunshine also has a review process employees may use to question decisions, as well as a compassion fund for staff needing loans or grants due to financial hardship.

"I've been a direct caregiver and I recognize the importance of that position in carrying out the organization's mission," says John. "We begin communicating our Anabaptist values in orientation. We believe all people are created in God's image; those we serve should be treated the way we would want to be treated. From early on we try to set the tone—the people we work with have developmental disabilities, but they are of value."

PEACE & RECONCILIATION
Listening, Understanding, Helping

Sandy Landis

Sandy Landis thinks **Penn Foundation** is a great place to work. And she should know! For the last 35 years she's been a member of the staff of this well-respected organization whose 295 employees provide behavioral and mental health services to some 7000 people each year.

"Peace and reconciliation in my role means being supportive and trying to help people work through problems with a satisfactory outcome," says Sandy, who has served as the director of Human Resources for 15 years. "One of the keys is listening and understanding the conflict from their perspective. It helps being an employee who has worked here a long time—I know a lot of the employees and interact with them on a regular basis.

"I take a lot of pride in working for Penn Foundation. We have a remarkable group of employees who truly believe in what they do and we are always trying to find new ways to reach out," she says. "I'm glad this opportunity came along for me. I feel like I have a part in helping people."

MHS ALLIANCE MEMBERS
—continued

Ohio
Adriel
Fairlawn Haven
Harmony Village
Mennonite Memorial Home
OrrVilla Retirement Community
Shalom Ministries
Sunshine, Inc.

Oklahoma
Fairview Fellowship Home

Oregon
Dallas Retirement Village
Hope Village
Mennonite Village
Oregon Mennonite Residential Services
Samaritan Health Services

Pennsylvania
Community Home Services
Dock Woods Community
Fairmount Homes
Frederick Mennonite Community
Friendship Community
Garden Spot Village, Inc.
Indian Creek Foundation
Landis Home Retirement Community
Menno Haven, Inc.
Mennonite Home
Messiah Village
Mt Hope Dunkard Brethren Church Home
No Longer Alone Ministries
Paxton Ministries
Peaceful Living
Penn Foundation
Philhaven
Rockhill Mennonite Community
Souderton Mennonite Homes
Tel Hai Retirement Community
United Zion Retirement Community
Upward Call
Valley View Retirement Community
Welsh Mountain Home

Puerto Rico
Hospital General Menonita

Virginia
Pleasant View, Inc.
Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community

For additional contact information on our members visit our website at ***www.mhsonline.org***

SPIRITUAL CARE

Being Christ's Hands and Feet

Stephen "Tig" Intagliata

Stephen "Tig" Intagliata takes Jesus' model of ministry seriously. That's why you can find this associate pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church (Glendale, Arizona) helping to attend to the spiritual needs of residents at **Glencroft Retirement Community.**

"Jesus ministered to people who were neglected or forgotten by society," says Tig. "Today the elderly are among those who are sometimes forgotten. I want to make sure to let them know that they matter to God and to us. We especially want to stay connected with Trinity members at Glencroft. We want to show our appreciation for how they've served our church; in their time of need, we want to serve them too."

Visiting residents and helping with worship services are examples of Tig's commitment to partnering with Glencroft's staff to provide pastoral and spiritual care for residents. In the last two years that partnership has gone to a deeper level through anointing services President Jay Shetler asked Tig to help lead.

"We anoint employees as a sign of the ministry of healing they perform through nursing, food service, pastoral care, housekeeping and administration," he says. "We want to empower them in the many different ways that they provide a healing touch.

"After the first service staff asked us to offer anointing annually. They said it is a meaningful way to affirm their vision and strength for being Christ's hands and feet to those they serve."

Norman and Mildred Steckley

STEWARDSHIP

"God has been very good."

Norman and Mildred Steckley want people to know they are no heroes. But they do believe that everyone should help as they can. After the sale of their farm, they decided to use some of their resources to help **Oregon Mennonite Residential Services** in McMinnville, Oregon, a Mennonite-related provider of services for those with developmental disabilities.

"When we find a property for a group home, the Steckleys buy it and lease it to us," explains Executive Director Karen Litwiller. "Then we go to foundations and request grant money to buy it. They have bought three properties in three years and we've paid the houses off completely with grant money."

Norm and Mildred consider it a mutually beneficial arrangement. OMRS pays them interest and since the property is there as collateral it's a safe investment.

"It's a good thing to help if we can," says Norm. "The state hospital closed down here and the people have got to have a place to go. We feel OMRS is doing a good job."

"We're thankful we can help them," agrees Mildred. "God's been very good to us."

O Lord, at the Last Supper, you said to your disciples, “All of you will become deserters.”

Reveal to me, Lord, how I have deserted you. [Pause]

O Lord, at the Last Supper you also said to your disciples: “When I am raised, I will go before you into Galilee. There you will see me.”

You said this knowing they would desert you.

O Lord, you surprise and overwhelm me. [Pause]

O Lord, after my desertion, I will meet you again. Thank you for your grace and resurrection power. Amen.

Willing spirit and weak flesh—the story of my life, Lord. I cannot make up my mind, this is my mind, fixed like genes, pooled into the cavity of being, revealed in this second garden but set since the first.

O Lord, receive this seamless duality. Redeem this inseparable alloy, whole and entire, asleep on my knees.

Awaken me and I’ll meet you in the Galilees ahead, yet balanced on this fulcrum—of little faith but still, of faith—weak and willing.

David Stevens is pastor of Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Compassion, healing and hope

Randy Springer is a member of Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Compassion, healing and hope give me life. My experience of these often has come from the most unexpected places, often outside the Mennonite church, and this has affected my outlook on life and my spiritual journey.

The Mennonite church has so much to offer in terms of modeling Jesus and direct contact with the Word, but this blessing may become our own curse if we fail to apply it to our lives in every situation. One change within our group that troubles me greatly is our willingness to critique and then criticize one another in the love of Christ. I find this more and more troubling and encourage all (myself included) to think before we speak or write.

I have been blessed throughout my life to experience joy and sadness, pain and loss, injury and healing—all of what life has to offer—within the context of the kingdom of God. Parents, spouse, friends, children, daughter-in-law to be, church, small groups and friends throughout the world have all helped me experience God's grace and love in many trying and desperate times along with the mountaintop experiences of life.

As a youngster, I watched and lived as my sister surrendered her life at the age of 11 to cystic fibrosis. She was such a gift to me. Christ was a real presence in her life and death. For the next 40 years my mother's struggle with mental illness, arthritis and macular degeneration have been part of my life and hers. She has never ceased to praise our Maker and give thanks to God for his love and care, even 21 years after giving up her husband to cancer in 1983. I am eternally grateful for how he modeled Jesus for me. To my home congregation I owe the same debt of gratitude.

I thought times of ease and successes were possible. Life was joyful though not always happy. Scripture is full to overflowing with references to the joy God feels when his children live in peace and harmony. Jesus made many references to this, recognizing the paradox of experiencing peace and war simultaneously. Life was good and going well when on Aug. 14, 2001, our only son was called home working in a business he and I had dreamed of doing together. Circumstances were now far beyond my control. Yet in all of this, God's grace and goodness never ceased to amaze me. It has been lived and modeled by many of our brothers and sisters across the kingdom and by many we might consider outside our group. How would the original 12 apostles fit within the framework of the Mennonite church? God's kingdom extends far beyond the reaches of our well-intentioned interpretations of life, Scripture and theological understandings.

God's kingdom extends far beyond the reaches of our well-intentioned interpretations of life, Scripture and theological understandings.

This compassion and caring has carried us, compassion and caring from many people we are quick to criticize. Many of these people are in the groups we now speak against. In our efforts to build the kingdom we may be part of its demise. A group espousing peace and justice, love and compassion has more splinters and planks than may be sustainable. What an irony that is! What a tragedy!

My walk with Christ has been carried out on the shoulders of my brothers and sisters and the strength they each draw and share, both as individuals and corporately from the Holy Spirit. It is God's great love for all creation that allows things to happen to all of us that reach into the core of life as he calls his children to himself. We are just a part of the whole.

Let us journey in unity, not necessarily of one accord, as life unfolds. May we respond with love, caring and compassion as we face a violent and gasping world, realizing it is only by God's grace that we live. As we journey let us walk in one another's shoes (two miles, not one) with all the love we can muster. May the peace of the season become the peace of reason and reality within the kingdom we so long to build.

Who are my brothers and sisters? My eyes have been opened on the road to Damascus.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **What a difference that day made!**—Elaine Bryant
- **We got rhythm, but what kind?**—Catherine Sine
- **Once dead river**—Chad Mason
- **Bethel students peer over dividing wall in Middle East**—Laurie L. Oswald

Mennonite schools in first-ever gathering

Group considers "Millennial" demographics; forms Mennonite Schools Council.

A first-time gathering of education leaders helped Mennonite schools focus on their current generation of students—called "Millennials"—and became a "coming out" party for Mennonite Education Agency, a small Mennonite Church USA organization formed in 2001. The 270 participants who gathered in Pittsburgh Feb. 18-20 represented 36 schools that relate to Mennonite Church USA through MEA.

Demographic researcher Catherine R. Cook described the current generation of students being served by Mennonite schools. Significantly different from the previous three generations (dubbed the Pioneer, Baby Boomer and Generation X generations), Cook listed seven characteristics of current students between 12 and 20: They feel special, have been sheltered, are confident, team-oriented and conventional. They are also pressured as "lifelong resumé builders and expect their school experiences to significantly expand this resumé," Cook said. She offered specific suggestions—such as testimonials from families on school Web sites—to institutions from elementary schools through seminaries to market themselves to Millennials.

In addition to demographic information, MEA's convention planners provided new information about the perception of Mennonite schools in Mennonite Church USA. Michael D. Wiese, professor of marketing at Anderson (Ind.) University, released his findings from a survey of Mennonite Church USA ministers (see box). Barth Hague, communications director for Mennonite Church USA, reported on specific findings related to church schools in the 2004 survey called "People in the Pew: Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA." Hague emphasized research confirming the role of the pastor in shaping perceptions congregational members have about church schools.

But the perception of Mennonite Education Agency across the church also became the focus of the education leaders gathering.

"MEA and its reputation … is also on the line," said John Rohrer, listening committee member from Columbus, Ohio. "This event and follow-up from it will shape the identity of MEA."

MEA was created in 2001 as an umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of the schools—kindergarten through seminary—that relate to Mennonite Church USA. The agency got off to a slow start for several reasons: Carlos Romero, appointed MEA's first executive director in 2002, needed to finish obligations at Goshen (Ind.) College before joining MEA. MEA is also attempting to create a network of schools with histories in the structures of General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC).

"God has sent us all back to school," Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA, said. "We need a new understanding and a new language that includes schools of all types to be part of Mennonite Church USA and not as appendages."

Noting that the gathering was the first of its kind for Mennonite Church USA, Romero acknowledged the importance many schools place on their GC or MC histories, then listed his dreams for the future.

"My first dream," Romero said, "is that we will be able to move beyond the differences of our history to a new identity within the missional calling of the church."

Romero also proposed that Mennonite colleges create a way for students to take one semester in another Mennonite college, a churchwide endowment fund to train new teachers for Mennonite schools (with special emphasis on training racial-ethnic candidates) and a system that would supplement current financial aid programs so that "anyone who wants to can go to a Mennonite school."

One dream came to fruition for some leaders. After a year of negotiations, members of Mennonite Elementary Education Council (MEEC) and Mennonite Secondary Education Council (MSEC) voted to merge their two organizations into a new Mennonite Schools Council. It will serve elementary, middle and high schools.—*Everett J. Thomas*

We need a new understanding and a new language that includes schools [as] … part of Mennonite Church USA and not as appendages.
—Jim Schrag

Pastoral and conference leaders attitudes toward Mennonite education

After compiling responses from 280 ministers in Mennonite Church USA, Anderson (Ind.) University researcher Michael D. Wiese released the following results Feb. 18 at the Education Leaders Gathering in Pittsburgh:

- Mennonite ministers endorse the existence of Mennonite education with strongest support evident at the seminary level (especially for training pastors) and greatest uncertainty about the role of K-8 education.

- With the exception of affordability, all levels of education were critiqued favorably for all values. The cost of education was the greatest concern.

- After providing a quality education (the highest priority), Christian education that is actively informed by an Anabaptist perspective must be the "normative distinctive element" in Mennonite schools.

- Two variables predict support for Mennonite schools: (1) if the respondent had family roots in a Mennonite community linked to immigrants from Europe or Russia and (2) if the respondent had personal involvement with a Mennonite school.

- There is a possibility that Mennonite higher education is seen more favorably today than in 1996; there is also evidence that pastors view the high schools as stronger in most ways than they did in 1998.

Source: Study of Pastoral/Area Conference Leadership Attitudes Toward Mennonite Education (Michael D. Wiese, February 2005)

Girls study at a school in a camp of displaced people in Zalingei, West Darfur, Sudan, one of several that are receiving supplies and support from Mennonite Central Committee through the Sudan Council of Churches.

Nils Carstensen, ACT/Caritas

Violence worsens in Darfur region

Violence against civilians has worsened in the western Darfur region of Sudan, according to Mennonite Central Committee partners, but MCC's relief projects are continuing to provide supplies and shelter to people who have been attacked and driven from their homes.

The conflict in Darfur, a Sudanese region about the size of France, has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and the displacement of about two million people since it began in 2003.

Government forces and government-backed militias are fighting rebel groups for control of the region and are accused by the United Nations of widespread war crimes against civilians, particularly against certain ethnic groups.

MCC's main partner in Darfur, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), is constructing shelters and distributing survival supplies to people living in camps because of ethnic violence.

Since last November, with MCC funding, the SCC has constructed 500 basic family dwellings, erected four school classrooms and distributed blankets, cooking pots, water basins, water cans, mosquito nets and soap to 3,349 families.

Observers in Darfur report continuing attacks on villages, towns, aid workers and camps of people displaced by previous attacks. The SCC reports that violence often closes roads, delaying deliveries of aid.

In a recent report, the United Nations blames the Sudanese military and government-backed militias known as Janjaweed for war crimes in Darfur, including killing civilians, destroying villages, torturing prisoners and rape.

The report also found evidence that rebel groups may be responsible for war crimes on a smaller scale.

With funding from MCC, the SCC is modifying and delivering tents donated by the United Nations to serve as school classrooms in camps of displaced people.

The SCC is also providing school supplies and will soon provide furnishings, textbooks, school offices and latrines with MCC funding and school kits donated by MCC constituents. Blankets donated by MCC constituents and 3,000 metric tons of food purchased through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will be distributed in the next several months.—*Tim Shenk of Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

Correction: "MCC Profile" (Feb. 15) incorrectly reported two numbers. Total donations, grants, sales and material aid was $48.8 million, and relief sales and thrift stores raised $10,638,000.

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Held at Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland PA

Mennonite leaders divided in Vietnam

Government offer to register the denomination sparks schism among pastors.

Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) leaders are divided over how to respond to a new government provision that would give their denomination legal status (see page 6).

In an executive order on Feb. 4, Vietnam's Prime Minister Phan Van Khai declared that Protestant denominations active in Vietnam prior to 1975 will be considered for legal registration. Local government bodies would then help them solve their need to build places for worship and religious education, according to the Prime Minister's directive.

Mennonite, Baptist and Adventist churches were active before 1975 and may be eligible for registration. But the Mennonite Church does not now have legal recognition and is frequently subject to harassment. Last August, representatives of the government's Committee of Religious Affairs contacted Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, president of the VMC to discuss procedures for registration.

This was a development that Trung had waited on for many years. However, others on the VMC administrative committee, while affirming the value of eventual registration, requested that Trung suspend the conversations until the government showed good faith by releasing from prison the church's general secretary, Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang, and other church leaders arrested in March 2004.

When Trung insisted on continuing these discussions while Quang remained in prison, some members of the executive committee called a special meeting of the church administrative committee to consider a proposal of no confidence in Trung's leadership.

Trung and several other leaders declined the invitation to attend that meeting. When this group met again in late November 2004, they declared no confidence in what they perceived as Trung's authoritarian leadership and voted to remove him from the VMC presidency. However, they hoped to keep him on the administrative committee in an advisory role.

Trung considered their meetings and their action invalid. He led the regularly scheduled administrative committee meetings Dec. 10-11, 2004, primarily with leaders who had not attended the special meetings, and they affirmed new people to the positions held by those who had voted no confidence in Trung.

The leaders (associates of the imprisoned Quang) who voted no confidence in Trung, said they had no intention of dividing the church. They explained that they took their action because several district leaders indicated they would leave the VMC if the church registered with the government at this time. These leaders viewed recognition as facilitating government control and suppression.

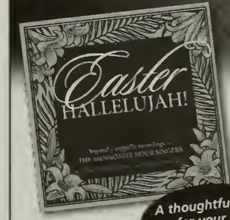
Trung said he stands ready to work with all the churches. Some within each group are trying to reconcile the two positions. Mennonite World Conference and other Mennonite bodies with ties to the Mennonites in Vietnam will continue to relate to the whole church. They call on churches worldwide to join in prayer for the unity and the witness of the Vietnam Mennonite Church. *—Vietnamese Ministries and Mennonite World Conference*

The leaders (associates of the imprisoned Quang) who voted no confidence in Trung said they had no intention of dividing the church.

MWC youth meet

A five-member youth committee formed by Mennonite World Conference held its first face-to-face meeting Jan. 22-25 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church with Asian representative Elina Ciptadi, a public relations consultant from Jakarta, Indonesia, as chair. They chose "AMIGOS: A Global Community of Young Anabaptists" as their new name. The committee was created as a result of the 2003 Global Youth Summit in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Ciptadi said there are benefits for the church from increased youth involvement.

"If young people are involved," she said, "it prevents the church from being too doctrinal or theological. We like to see real things happen." She added that youth and young adults bring the gifts of enthusiasm, energy, creativity, a willingness to take risks and an eagerness to learn.*—from a Mennonite World Conference release*



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Covenant-signing formalizes relationship

Argentine and Pennsylvania congregations are linked through Mission Network.

Linda Shelly

Atlantic Coast Conference administrator Miriam Martin and Argentine Mennonite church representative Raúl García sign the covenant that celebrates the intent of their groups to continue their relationship into the future.

Representatives from four congregations in an Atlantic Coast Conference cluster, the churches of Visión Evangelística y Misionera de la Zona Oeste and Mennonite Mission Network gathered at the Mennonite Church of Pehuajó, Argentina, on Jan. 8 to sign a covenant formalizing the growing relationship among the three groups. The ACC cluster is comprised of the Akron, Forest Hills, Neffsville and Ridgeview Mennonite churches; all are in Lancaster County, Pa.

The all-day meeting included singing, prayer and sharing about churches in Argentina and the United States. Eighteen students offered their testimonies as well; they all attended seminary courses through the International Faculty for Theological Education, with support through a grant from the ACC cluster. Sixty students have taken courses during the first two years of the program.

"Knowing there was a group in the United States that was praying for us gave me a lot of energy and helped me during the long trips to attend classes," says Marys Cuevas, who with a group of others from Santa Rosa traveled about 300 miles round-trip once a month to attend classes.

Groups from Atlantic Coast Conference and Argentina visit each other in alternating years to deepen relationships between partners through firsthand experiences of one another's contexts, to review and learn from one another's practices, to stimulate deeper prayer for one another and deeper spiritual bondedness. *—Ann Graham Price of Mennonite Mission Network*

Movie nights: 'sermons for our times'

Vic Thiessen, executive director of the London Mennonite Centre, believes the movie medium's power to influence lives, thoughts and even beliefs makes film-watching vital to understanding the modern world, even if the messages do not always fit into Christian theology.

"Films are the sermons of our time," Thiessen says, paraphrasing author Gareth Higgins. "They help us think about God and talk about God. It's theology for the masses."

For five years, Thiessen, who represents Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness in London, has hosted a weekly movie night featuring a flick followed by a conversation—a tradition he started while he lived in Edmonton, Alta. He said nearly every discussion turns theological, regardless of the movie.

"Some of the people who have attended my movie nights have seen it as the place where most of their theological interaction and learning takes place—more than in church. For others, it restored their belief in a community of faith and brought them back into the church.

"Many of our film nights have focused on Anabaptist theological themes like community—indeed, some film-night groups have been a real community to those who attended," he says. "Most of the best film nights happened because people were willing to be open and share whatever they were thinking, including some very painful parts of their lives."*—Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

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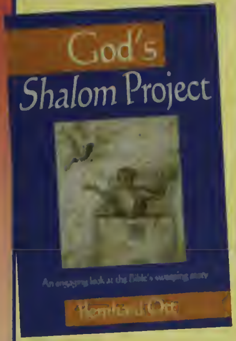
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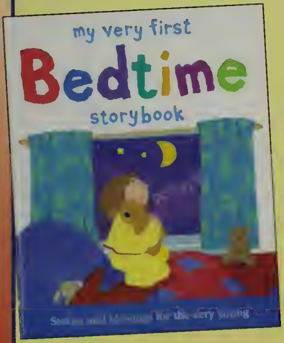
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CALENDAR

Anabaptist Peace Center, Hymn Sing for Peace, April 9, 2 p.m. in Lafayette Park, Washington, D.C., just across from the White House. For more information visit www.apcwdc.mennonite.net

Lancaster Mennonite High School, Mennonite Secondary Education Council Band and Orchestra Festival, March 3-4 with a public concert March 4, 7 p.m. in the Fine Arts Center. For more information call 717-299-0436.

WORKERS

Kaufman-Weldy, Karen, was licensed Jan. 30 toward ordination at Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind.

Lanctot, Nina Bartelt, was installed Feb. 6 as pastor at Florence Church of the Brethren-Mennonite, Constantine, Mich.

Meyer, Lewis J., Jr., was installed Sept. 5, 2004, at First Deaf Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Joseph S., was installed Feb. 6 as lead pastor of Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Benner, Cali Elizabeth, Jan. 28, to Scott and Angela Moyer Benner, Souderton, Pa.

Bergey, Rachel Hope, Feb. 2, to Luke and Rachelle Marcho Bergey, Harleysville, Pa.

Butcher, Braylon Michael, Feb. 7, to Montrell Butcher and Elyse Unruh, Newton, Kan.

Cassel, Leah Michelle, Feb. 6, to C. Bryan and Tracy Derstine Cassel, Souderton, Pa.

Claassen, Rachelle Erin, Feb. 2, to Mark and Melody Kauffman Claassen, Elkhart, Ind.

Coblentz, Luke Everett, Jan. 24, to Christopher and Sue Schmucker Coblentz, Garfield Heights, Ohio.

Diller, Colton Jacob, Dec. 28, 2004, to Phil and Kristi Pankratz Diller, Newton, Kan.

Epp, Connor Jacob, Jan. 16, to Nathan and Sheila Peters Epp, Marion, S.D.

Greenawalt, Britton Danielle, Jan. 21, to Timothy and Kristen Hibschman Greenawalt, Terre Hill, Pa.

Hastings-Fuhr, Naomi Therese, Dec. 23, 2004, to Adrian and Hannah Hastings-Fuhr, Waterloo, Ont.

Kauffman, Lena Grace, Jan. 21, to Joel and Andrea Leichty Kauffman, W. Liberty, Ohio.

Landis, Savannah Alexis, Feb. 3, to Philip and Trina Derstine Landis, Souderton, Pa.

Lynch, Caleb Martin, Jan. 21, to Daniel and Ila Waltner Lynch, Tynsborough, Mass.

Miller, Charles Stuart, Dec. 28, 2004, to Delmar and Suzanne McKenzie Miller, Arlington, Kan.

Miller, Guenevere Linda Elaine, Jan. 22, to Matthew and Karen Showalter Miller, Boston, Mass.

Mumau, Elias Samuel, Nov. 9, 2004, to Michael and Kristen Scheetz Mumau, Erie, Pa.

Nafziger, Helena Simone, Feb. 2, to Jeremy and Michael Ann Courtney Nafziger, Staunton, Va.

Penner, Alison Sue Weidner, Jan. 13, to Larry Penner and Becky Weidner, Lancaster, Pa.

Penner, Sienna Martina Macz, Feb. 13, 2004, received for adoption Oct. 31, 2004, by Kevin and Malene Martin Penner, Goshen, Ind.

Showalter, Allen Jacob, Jan. 31, to Wes and Jennifer Heine Showalter, Harrisonburg, Va.

Slemmer, Nathaniel William Neufeld, Jan. 27, to Jonathan Slemmer and Kristi Neufeld, Lawrence, Kan.

Stoltzfus, Lucas Aaron, Sept. 25, 2004, to Jeremy and Stacy Stoltzfus, Enola, Pa.

Yoder, Audra Finley, Jan. 30, to Benjamin and Elizabeth Finley Yoder, LaCrosse, Wis.

Yoder, Dallas Jeffrey, Jan. 23, to Jeff and Roberta Yoder, DeGraff, Ohio.

Yoder, Simon Aeschliman, Feb. 5, to Darrin Yoder and Julie Aeschliman, Lancaster, Pa.

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MARRIAGES

Buller/Huber: Heidi Buller, Hesston, Kan., and Tim Huber, South Hutchinson, Kan., Dec. 18, 2004, at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Gerber/King: Alexis Gerber, Kidron, Ohio, and Ross King, Dalton, Ohio, Jan. 15 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Lantz/Yoder: Katie Lantz, Fargo, N.D., and Timothy Yoder, Kalona, Iowa, Dec. 31, 2004, in Fargo.

Rohrer/Steiner: Hannah Rohrer, Kidron, Ohio, and Ryan Steiner, Orrville, Ohio, Dec. 31, 2004, at Kidron Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Beckler, Truman, 82, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, died Jan. 31 of cancer. Spouse: Edna Unternahrer Beckler. Parents: Ira and Marian Boshart Beckler. Children: Gerald, Mary Stutzman, Jane Leichty, Elaine Stutzman; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 4 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Bowman, Abner M., 71, Floradale, Ont., died Jan. 7. Spouse: Vera Bowman. Parents: Henry and Sulinda Martin Bowman. Children: Karen Gaul, Gloria Martin; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 11 at Floradale Mennonite Church.

Conner, Edith V. Kremer, 90, Milford, Neb., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Beryl Conner (deceased). Parents: Lee and Gertrude Schweitzer Kremer. Children: James, Rosemary Thomas; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 20 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Egli, Florence, 83, Eureka, Ill., died Jan. 27. Parents: John B. and Emma Good Egli. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Eichorn, Arthur E., 79, Sturgis, Mich., died Jan. 24. Spouse: Mary Jane Wickey Eichorn. Parents: Lewis and Ida Troyer Eichorn. Children: Christine Oswald, Geraldine Schwartz, Phyllis Hayhurst, Arthur, Rebecca Miller; 22 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 28 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich.

Faul, James, 74, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 7. Spouse: Marlene Cole Paul. Parents: Harry and Anna Klaassen Faul. Children: Sharon Faul Morris, Mary; three grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 11 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Fretz, Joseph Winfield, 94, North Newton, Kan., died Jan. 24. Spouse: Marguerite Geiger Fretz (deceased). Parents: J. Clarence and Ella Landis Fretz. Children: Stephen, Thomas, Sara Fretz-Goering; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Guengerich, L. Glen, 95, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 24. Spouse: Allie Davison Guengerich. Parents: Elmer J. and Magdalena Yoder Guengerich. Children: Lowell, Elaine Miller, Galen, Annette Ritter, Audrey Baylor; 12 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Burial: Jan. 29 in East Union Cemetery, Kalona, Iowa.

Hunsberger, Winfield, 83, Sellersville, Pa., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Martha Shelly Hunsberger. Parents: Paul and Edna Hunsberger. Children: Duane, Glen, Dawn Miller; nine grandchildren; six step-grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman, Irene Zimmerly, 71, Wichita, Kan., died Dec. 17, 2004. Spouse: Ellsworth Kauffman. Parents: Clarence J. and Florence Miller Zimmerly. Children: Judith Ann, Lisa Kelley, Eric, Kurt, Kathleen; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 22 at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita.

Kaufman, Peter R., 93, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 8. Spouse: Linda Mueller Kaufman. Parents: Jacob S. and Marie Goering Kaufman. Child: Roger; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

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Kratzer, Rosa, 83, Dalton, Ohio, died Dec. 15, 2004, due to complications from a stroke. Spouse: Loyal Kratzer (deceased). Parents: Amos and Ella Mae Nussbaum. Children: LaVon, Rosemary, Prudy Steiner, Veryl, Doug; 13 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 18 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kurtz, Cletus, 96, Smithville, Ohio, died Jan. 22. Spouse: (1st) Carrie Hartzler Zigler (deceased), (2nd) Helen Ewing Kurtz (deceased). Parents: Simon and Fannie Musser Kurtz. Funeral: Jan. 26 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville.

Lehman, LaVoid H., 89, Topeka, Kan., died May 5, 2004. Spouse: Betty Rice Lehman. Parents: Harry and Mae Bobeck Lehman. Children: Greg, Dexter; stepchildren Gary Wiley, Marlene Gohl; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Topeka (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Loewen, Velma J., 51, Normal, Ill., died Jan. 10. Parents: Harry and Verna Schroeder. Stepmother: Mildred Loewen Quiring. Funeral: Jan. 15 at Mennonite Church of Normal.

Miller, Monroe, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 5. Spouse: Sylvia Kauffman Miller (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Emma Hochstetler Miller. Children: Stephen, Carl, Daniel, Sharon Ropp, Carol Hostetler, Jeannie Penner; 17 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 8 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Miller, Salinda Yoder, 87, Kalona, Iowa, died Jan. 28. Spouse: Harvey H. Miller. Parents: Jonas and Elizabeth Kanagy Yoder. Children: Roy D., Robert L., Mary C., eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 31 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Myers, Mary E. Horning, 86, Hatfield, Pa., died Oct. 26, 2004. Spouse: Lester L. Myers. Parents: Joseph and Emma Lapp Horning. Children: Lester H., Mary Kay Kreider, Ray T.; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 29 at Doylestown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Nussbaum, Clarence, 86, Dalton, Ohio, died Dec. 13, 2004. Spouse: Luella Nussbaum (deceased). Parents: Amos and Ella Nussbaum. Children: Gary, Dale, Loretta Amstutz, Brenda Sigler; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Ortman, Roland B., 89, Moundridge, Kan., died Jan. 9 of a heart attack. Spouse: Dorothy Krehbiel Ortman (deceased). Parents: Fred and Christine Ortman. Children: Rick, Susan Goering, Stephanie Thompson; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 13 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead, Kan.

Peters, Nora H., 91, Lancaster, Pa., died Dec. 27, 2004. Spouse: Aldus J. Peters (deceased). Parents: Abram D. and Emma Herr Metzler. Children: Robert, Elsie, Martin, Walter, Ray, Roy; 11 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 30 at New Providence (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Regier, Cora Lee "Corky" Hawkins, 84, Wichita, Kan., died Jan. 15 of cancer. Spouse: Wilbert Regier (deceased). Parents: Yantis and Alpha Hawkins. Children: Jarold, Barbara Mize, Sandy Rigby, Connie Regier; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 19 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead, Kan.

Schloneger, Essie Mellinger, 94, Orrville, Ohio, died Jan. 30. Spouse: Ray Schloneger (deceased). Parents: Melchor and Ellen Burkholder Mellinger. Children: Melva Conrad, Jane Landes, Phyllis Lehman, Weldon; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Shantz, Elizabeth Horst, 85, Harrisonburg, Va., died Jan. 10 of an aortic aneurysm. Spouse: Gordon William Shantz (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Martha Martin Horst. Children: Ivan, Gordon, David, Lorna Beth; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Mt. Clinton Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Stutzman, Hazel B., 83, Milford, Neb., died Jan. 14. Spouse: Melvin Stutzman (deceased). Parents: Ben B. and Katie E. Bender Rediger. Children: Bruce, Pauline Eigsti, Brenda Meyer; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 16 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Wedel, Sherrill Ann Schrag, 62, McPherson, Kan., died Jan. 26 of cancer. Spouse: Tony Wedel. Parents: Walter and Margaret Schrag. Children: Kip, Troy, Lauri Isaacs; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 30 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Wind, Joseph B., 91, Washington, Ill., died Jan. 31. Spouse: Mildred Blumenshine Wind. Parents: Simon and Matilda Garber Wind. Children: Kenneth, Gordon; 11 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Yoder, Naomi Swartley, 78, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 4, 2004. Spouse: Arthur H. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Elias and Mary Ann Alderfer Swartley. Child: Arthur H., III. Funeral: Nov. 9 at Doylestown (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Zuercher, Ellis, 79, Orrville, Ohio, died Dec. 13, 2004. Spouse: Mary Louise Zuercher. Parents: Issac and Emma Zuercher. Children: David, Penni Martin, Candance Miller, Tobi, LaRue, Bernie, Ian; 14 grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Dec. 16 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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RUSSIA and UKRAINE (July 29 - August 12)
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FOLLOWING JESUS in ISRAEL (October 19-31)
INDONESIA (November 10-27)

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ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (June 28 - July 10)

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Amigo Centre Board of Directors of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference is searching for a person to serve as ***executive director*** for the Centre. This important ministry includes the following functions: serving as chief executive officer; providing primary staff leadership for the overall operations of Amigo Centre; working with the Amigo Centre Board of Directors in clarifying vision and direction of the centre's ministries; working collaboratively with IN-MI Conference leadership in providing retreat and camping opportunities for the congregations of the conference and surrounding area.

He or she will possess a vibrant Christian faith with a Mennonite Anabaptist perspective. He or she will have some theological education and/or professional training with at least six years of related ministry experience is preferred. The appointee will be available ideally by June 2005.

We encourage women, men and people from under-represented groups to apply.

Interested people may submit a resumé with references to: Amigo Centre Search Committee, c/o Jim Gascho, 212 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. For more information call Jim Gascho at 574-533-5396 ext. 102, or email Jgascho@SharingServices.com or visit Amigo Centre's Web site at www.amigocentre.org.

The **Vineland United Mennonite Church** is accepting applications for the full-time position of ***assistant minister*** to begin in June. We are a congregation of 350 members situated in a growing rural community.

Our church seeks an enthusiastic individual with a strong desire to nurture youth spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Primary responsibilities include leadership of the youth program, with an emphasis on relationship building. This individual will also support the young adult and children's programs. Candidates should have formal training in theology/religious studies and possess a commitment to the values and visions of the Anabaptist Mennonite church.

Please direct inquiries and resumés to Vineland United Mennonite Church, c/o Dave Gossen, 4563 Cedarbrook Lane, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B5; phone 905-563-6482; email dgossen@sympatico.ca. Applications will be accepted until March 14.

Camp Deerpark is seeking to fill the position of ***maintenance director***. This person is responsible for building and grounds maintenance, new construction and supervision of maintenance and housekeeping staff. Salaried position with benefits, including housing and insurance. Camp Deerpark is owned and operated by the New York City Mennonite churches and offers people of all ages, races and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy Christian camping at an affordable price. For more information please contact Ken Bontrager at 845-754-8669 or admin@campdeerpark.org

Franconia Mennonite Church, located in Franconia, Pa., is seeking a talented, energetic individual to fill the position of ***music director*** and lead a congregation of over 700 members in our music ministry. This very important role will give leadership to all music areas within the church, including adult and children's choirs, music planning for worship services and congregational singing. For more information or to request a detailed job description, please call Keith Berger at 215-723-3220. Resumés can be sent to kberger@franconiamennonite.org.

Connecting Families Weekend, April 15-17 at Anitochian Village, Ligonier, Pa. Theme: "Sources of Strength and Community." Speakers are Kathleen Temple and Ted Grimsrud of Harrisonburg, Va., longtime Mennonite pastors and teachers. Connecting Families welcomes families, friends and supporters of all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, as well as GLBT people. This is intended to be a safe, relaxing weekend to share stories and common concerns regarding minority sexual orientation issues as they affect our families, friends, churches and ourselves. Contact Larry Miller or Stephen Wilcox at 301-864-6633 or email larandsteph@aol.com.

Artistic director for **Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster** (Pa.). Part-time beginning July 1. Children's choir experience, vocal training, MA preferred. Commitment to Anabaptist values. Resumé to MCCL, 1229 Mill Mar Road, Lancaster, PA 17601. Questions to Pat Myers at ljpsmyers@aol.com or 717-898-1210.

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time, continuing ***faculty position in finance and accounting*** beginning fall 2005. Ph.D. or D.B.A. with specialization in finance preferred. Master's degree with work experience is also acceptable. Ph.D. candidates considered. Teaching assignment will include introductory to advanced-level finance and accounting courses and a graduate class in the M.B.A. program (12 hours per semester). Student advising, university service and ongoing scholarship expected. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. EMU uses an extended contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable) and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email to ugdean@emu.edu, www.emu.edu. Review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for ***Spanish instructor*** to teach upper-level classes, including AP Spanish, for the 2005-06 school year. Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446, fax 215-362-2943, email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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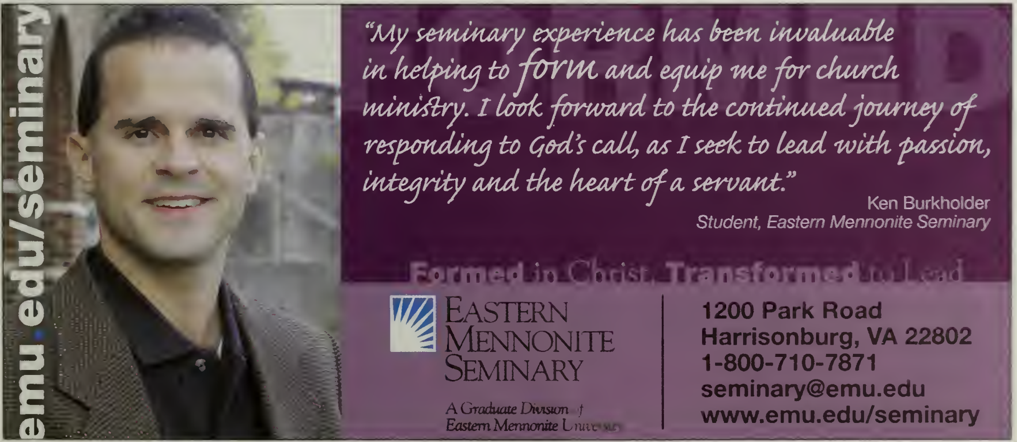
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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., positions beginning August 2005.

Western seeks a passionate, dynamic ***music director*** to lead its award-winning choir program. Director will oversee five choirs and two bands, involving 80 percent of the student body. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in music education or vocal performance. Teaching license and experience desired.

Contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or email him at djwhite@westernmennoniteschool.org

Western seeks female candidates interested in youth ministry to serve as ***resident assistant*** for its high school resident program. Responsibilities include mentoring students, planning and supervising activities mainly during the weekday program. This is a volunteer position with benefits.

Closing: March 31. Contact Sherri-Lynn Wenger at 866-343-9378 or sherriwenger@hotmail.com.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students from several states/provinces and from around the world. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. We are seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking a person gifted, trained and/or experienced in ***children's ministries*** to provide leadership, vision and program development for children birth through grade 5 for a full-time position. People interested should request an application from Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505, or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

Management opportunity—Multilocation restaurant and retailing business seeking a ***general manager*** for mid-central Ohio location. This challenging position involves managing a large staff and requires leadership experience with the ability to provide a progressive vision for the future. Send resumé to P.O. Box 68, Walnut Creek, OH 44687.

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Goshen College departments of mathematics and computer science seek applicants for a ***sabbatical replacement*** position to teach courses in at least two of the areas: mathematics, mathematics education and/or computer science. There will either be one full-time hire or multiple part-time hires for one year, with a possible extension to two years.

Master's degree required, Ph.D. preferred, in the mathematical or computer sciences or related field. Must have the ability to teach an appropriate combination of courses the departments plan to offer, which include undergraduate mathematics, mathematics education and computer science topics. A list of these courses can be found at www.goshen.edu/catalog/. Preference will be given to candidates who exhibit strong teaching and professional credentials.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment/. Please send or fax letter of application, resumé and three letters of reference to 574-535-7060 or attach an email to hr@goshen.edu. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Goshen College seeks a full-time ***director of counseling services*** available to work for an annual 10-month contract to begin April 25. The director of counseling services provides mental health assessment, short-term counseling, educational programming and crisis intervention in collaboration with the student life team.

Qualifications: a master's degree in counseling, social work, clinical psychology or a closely related mental health studies program. Three years of counseling experience in mental health setting preferred; licensed as a mental health professional in Indiana also preferred. Skills required include strong interpersonal skills, ability to work collaboratively and independently.

To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment. Please send or fax letter of application, resumé and three letters of reference to 574-535-7060 or attach an email to hr@goshen.edu. Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Is God calling you to use your leadership abilities, management skills and two or more years of cross-cultural experience to serve others through **MCC**? This year MCC needs people to lead MCC work in Congo, Bangladesh and a director for its Visitor Exchange Program (based in Akron, Pa.). In 2006, MCC will need leaders for MCC work in Jamaica, Bolivia, Haiti, Tanzania, Nigeria, Mexico and a West Coast MCC director (based in Reedley, Calif.). Plan ahead. Application review begins immediately for 2005 positions. Application review for 2006 positions begins August 2005. Contact Charmayne Brubaker, Human Resources, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for job descriptions and more information about these upcoming MCC leadership openings.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking a qualified applicant for the ***associate director for development.*** This position is responsible for soliciting funds for the ongoing operations and special projects of the university. The primary focus of the associate director is to generate financial resources. Bachelor's degree required. Experience in fund-raising, business or organizational structures; banking, finance and/or insurance experience; or related fields will be helpful. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/allopen.html. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Mennonite Mission Network seeks a full-time ***production manager*** in our Great Lakes office, Elkhart, Ind. Responsibilities include scheduling and tracking the status of all print projects in the communications department. Applicant must be detail oriented, organized, committed to Anabaptist values and the mission of Mission Network. A position description may be viewed on our Web site at MennoniteMission.net. Interested people please send a letter of interest and resumé to staffrecruitment@MennoniteMission.net or call Human Resources at 574-523-3008.

RESOURCES

The Seven Last Words from the Cross by Fleming Rutledge (Eerdmans, 2005, $12) presents seven meditations on the final sayings of Jesus from the cross. She links the sayings with contemporary concerns and includes references to hymns associated with Good Friday.

God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It by Jim Wallis (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005, $24.95) wants to make religious communities and the U.S. government more accountable to key values of the prophetic tradition: more pro-justice, pro-peace, pro-environment, pro-equality, pro-consistent ethic of life and pro-family.

Great Women in Christian History: 37 Women Who Changed Their World, edited by Kenneth Curtis and Daniel Graves (Christian Publications, 2005, $16.99), tells the stories of 37 women—including Harriet Tubman, Susanna Wesley, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lady Selina Hastings—who changed the world through Christ's unique calling on their lives.

Let Us Break Bread Together: A Passover Haggadah for Christians by Michael A. Smith and Rami Shapiro (Paraclete Press, 2005, $8.95) explains how to organize and prepare a seder meal and provides questions and answers for reciting around the table in order to understand the essential themes of enslavement and redemption. Smith is a pastor, and Shapiro is a rabbi.

Opening the Bible: Essays by Howard H. Charles, edited by J. Robert Charles (Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2005, $18), collects 50 essays Charles wrote for *Builder* as lesson helps for Sunday school teachers. His son edited them after his father's death in 2002.

Secrets of the Jewish Exile: The Bible's Codes, Messiah and Suffering Servant by Kenneth Curtis and Daniel Graves (Word Association Publishers, 2004, $24.95) argues for identifying Isaiah's "suffering servant" as Ezekiel, who died as a substitute king of Babylon.

The Cultural Creation of Christianity by Howard M. Snider (Infinity Publishing, 2005, $11.95) explains societal factors that influenced the early development of Christianity and provides a framework for understanding the contrasting forms of Christianity in society today. It is available at Amazon.com and buybooksontheweb.com.

An Amish Patchwork: Indiana's Old Orders in the Modern World by Tom Meyers and Steve Nolt (Indiana University Press, 2005, $19.95) describes the history and life of Indiana's 19 Amish and two Old Order Mennonite communities, exploring their surprising diversity and underlying unity. The authors teach at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Earth Trek: Celebrating and Sustaining God's Creation by Joanne Moyer (Herald Press, 2005, $10.99) uses the seven days of creation as a basis for exploring the aspects of our created world, how it is threatened, what is being done to protect it and what individuals, households and congregations can do to live more sustainably.

Anabaptists Meeting Muslims: A Calling for Presence in the Way of Christ, edited by James R. Krabill, David W. Shenk and Linford Stutzman (Herald Press, 2005, $24.99), reveals a rich diversity of Anabaptist engagement with Muslims around the world.

Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics by Elizabeth Zelensky and Lela Gilbert (Brazos Press, 2005, $12.99) details the nature and purpose of Orthodox icons and how their contemplation might enrich Christians' spiritual lives.

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We belong at the table

Anne Krabill Hershberger

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu or visit www.anabaptist-ethics.org.

Stories of family members, friends and neighbors who are falling through the cracks of our health-care system touched emotions and incited anger in an elective Sunday school class, part of our Health-Care Access Sunday (Jan. 23) at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind. We are not alone in those reactions. Across the United States, people are raising their voices in outrage at current health-care inequities.

U.S. attention was focused on the health-care crisis in the early 1990s: Millions lacked health insurance, the ticket to accessing health care. People also voiced concerns about the skyrocketing costs of medical interventions and pharmaceutical products, disparities in treatment between cultural and racial groups and the use of expensive emergency rooms for primary care. And many bemoaned that the wealthiest country in the world was the only industrialized nation that lacked basic health-care coverage for all its citizens.

Mennonite voices and experience must be heard alongside other faith communities.

The General Conference Mennonite Church in 1992 and the Mennonite Church in 1993 passed resolutions deploring the injustices in U.S. health care and calling on Mennonite Christians "to help shape the vision for a better and more just health-care system." But, as health-care reform failed at the national level, partially due to objections from special interest groups and fearful politicians, the concern also faded on the Mennonite radar screen.

Unfortunately, as Joseph Kotva emphasizes (Dec. 7, 2004, issue), the U.S. health-care crisis has deepened. All that was wrong with health care 10 years ago is now dramatically worse. Eleven million more people are uninsured, bringing the total to 45 million. Of these, over 70 percent are in working families, and 10 million are children. Health-care debt causes half of all personal bankruptcies (*Health Affairs*, Feb. 2). Despite spending far more per capita on health care than any other country, our health outcomes are not nearly as good. Infant mortality rates are better in authoritarian Cuba, and we would save 18,900 babies per year if our rate equaled that of Singapore.

In response to this situation, ACHE (Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics) agreed on behalf of Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board to facilitate the "health-care access initiative." Approved by Mennonite Church USA Delegates to Atlanta 2003, this initiative included the mandate to "develop a new Resolution on Health Care in the United States, taking into account the current problems of access to health care along with the resolutions on record from the former General Conference Mennonite Church (1992) and the Mennonite Church (1993)."

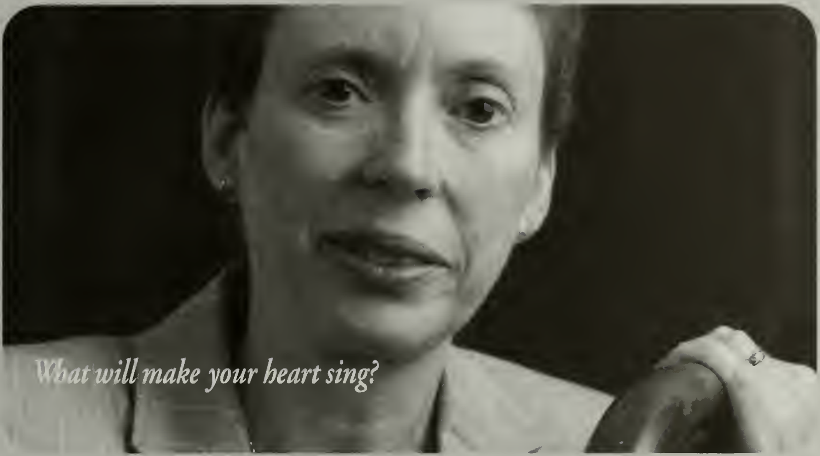
A six-member group has drafted a resolution. An extensive process went into the document's development, including 10 writers-group meetings and many email exchanges, feedback from a group of nine reviewers, numerous interactions with the 19-member Healthcare Access Commission (see Feb. 1, page 30) and consideration of the 177 responses to a draft that circulated throughout Mennonite Church USA. The resolution is now in the hands of the Healthcare Access Commission and the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

This document assesses U.S. health-care reality and basic concern for the situation in a desire to be disciples of Jesus, who both "healed the sick as a sign of God's reign" and "challenged unjust societal structures." It then is up to our church to assume greater responsibility by, for instance, making appropriate lifestyle choices, engaging the discerning faith community in health decisions and exercising restraint in the use of medical technology, and working to provide better health-care access for our neighbors. The resolution concludes by calling us to join "other faith-based communities in urging our government to enact a system of health care in which everyone, everywhere in the United States has access to basic, affordable health care, and where the risks and expenses are shared by all."

Following World War II, Civilian Public Service conscripts, including many Mennonites, brought national attention to the dreadful conditions in U.S. psychiatric institutions. This led to community mental health services and improved patient-centered care in psychiatric institutions. Can our generation make a difference for a just health-care system, as they did for mental health services?

Mennonite voices and experience must be heard alongside other faith communities—such as American Baptist Churches, Church of the Brethren, Catholic Health Association, Friends Committee on National Legislation, United Methodists and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations—who have stated concern, even outrage, about U.S. health-care injustice. We belong at the table to advocate for affordable health-care coverage for everyone in the country.

LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.


What will make your heart sing?

"O sing to the Lord a new song."— Psalm 96:1

2005 NATIONAL CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM

At the center of the congregation is the pastor. Spiritual guide, scholar, counselor, preacher, administrator, confidant, teacher, pastoral visitor, and friend, a pastor has a privileged position and performs many roles. In season and out, a pastor is called upon to lead communities to the life-giving waters of God.

The National Clergy Renewal Program, offered by Lilly Endowment Inc., is intended to strengthen Christian congregations by providing an opportunity for pastors to step away briefly from the demands of daily parish life and to engage in a period of renewal and reflection. They are asked: "What will make your heart sing?" They are invited to plan the steps that will make that happen. The Endowment will provide up to 120 grants of up to $45,000 each directly to congregations for support of a renewal program for their pastor.

Applications are now being accepted. They must be postmarked by June 10, 2005, and the award announcement will be made by October.

LILLY ENDOWMENT INC.

For information: Contact the Endowment's Web site: **lillyendowment.org**, click on Religion, then on National Clergy Renewal Program, Request for Proposals; e-mail clergyrenewal@yahoo.com; call 317/916-7302, or write to Program Director, Religion, Lilly Endowment Inc. 2801 N. Meridian St., P.O. Box 88068, Indianapolis, IN 45208-0068. *Pictured top*: The Rev. Melissa Bane Sevier, 2001 recipient of a clergy renewal grant. *Above, left to right*: The Rev. Ivan D. Hicks, 2004 recipient; the Rev. Michael Mather, 1999 recipient, and the Rev. William C. Schooler, 2000 recipient.

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Everett J. Thomas

This healing thing

When it comes to health care, Mennonites want to change the world for the better. Maybe it's because we know we did it once before in the United States.

During World War II, young Mennonites conscientiously opposed to the war served in civilian assignments in the United States instead of in the military. They built roads, public facilities, put out forest fires and canned meat. Some also worked in state hospitals where mentally ill patients were locked away from public view. Scandalized by the poor care provided those patients, these young adults returned to Mennonite congregations and galvanized interest in caring for the mentally ill. Mennonite mental health facilities now are scattered across the United States, where people with developmental disabilities are given loving care.

But Mennonite leadership for mental health did more than build facilities. It also changed the way our society views mental health. This value change in our country has translated into millions of dollars of tax money invested in treatment and care.

That success now has emboldened Mennonite Church USA to tackle another national problem: lack of health care for millions of U.S. citizens.

What should a church that cares about justice do when some of our neighbors do not have access to such a basic service? Mennonite Church USA delegates at Atlanta 2003 considered this question and then authorized "a project to demonstrate our commitment, as a community of faith, to universal access to health care by developing models that focus on helping congregations deal with problems of access to health care."

It's time to get specific about this healing thing … and change our country again.

Fifty years ago, Mennonites responded to such justice questions by rolling up their sleeves, forming planning groups and starting programs and facilities. It was the sort of pragmatic response to problems others ignore that often bears fruit from our entrepreneurial work ethic.

But as those programs and institutions grew, they brought complex liability issues and ethical dilemmas to a church ill-prepared to provide the professional counsel required. As the programs matured into established institutions, some leaders thought they also diverted time, money and attention from more important mission activities.

In the 1980s the institutions were cut loose and told to fend for themselves. But in recent years—especially after the formation of Mennonite Church USA—some leaders insisted that the church needs to remain connected to the ministries and institutions that have grown out of our history. Consequently, an innovative and timely expression of this connection was created last year in the form of Mennonite Health Services Alliance. This umbrella organization for some 75 health-service providers now affords a critical connection to our denomination and to other Anabaptist groups.

"Once again, health-care services are a major denominational ministry," said Mennonite Church USA moderator D. Duane Oswald last April, when MHS Alliance was formed.

If we have this vibrant and compassionate network—Mennonite-related nursing homes, retirement communities, acute-care hospitals, agencies serving children, youth and those with developmental disabilities—why will the question of health-care access be the issue placed before Mennonite Church USA delegates at Charlotte 2005?

The answer: Many of our neighbors still do not have access to basic health care. Furthermore, this time our response won't be to some problem hidden away in state hospitals. It will be about how each of us personally contributes to the sick health-care situation in our country.

We are being called to provide leadership once again to address a national disgrace. But as we do so, we will discover the ways our own choices are complicit in the U.S. health-care system. The articles (beginning on page 8) reveal some of this complicity and confront us with new questions.

We say, God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace so that God's healing and hope flow through us to world. It's time to get specific about this healing thing … and change our country again.—*ejt*

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what a difference that day made!

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Life is too short to grab it all

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Supersizing is symbolic of our grab-it-all culture. Supersized meals lead to supersized pants, recliners, SUVs, heart hospitals and eventually caskets. Supersizing goes on at every level of our culture. We see it in the super Wal-Marts and Home Depots, the continuing corporate mergers and the growing size of farms.

What would it take to decontaminate our saturated souls? Mercy, perhaps. Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." Mercy is other-focused. It's about giving rather than grabbing. It is compassion for the needy and those suffering. It is favoring the people out of favor.

Bible commentator William Barclay notes that the Roman world of Jesus' day did not value mercy. The culture was merciless toward slaves, children and women. Aristotle wrote that a slave was just a tool. Slaves were often beaten, branded and even killed for ordinary mistakes such as dropping a plate. Unwanted children were thrown out like refuse. The Greek and Roman gods were often described as frivolously brutal in their behavior.

That is different from the God of the Bible, who is described as merciful. Psalm 136 says that God created the universe in mercy. By mercy God saved the Hebrews from oppression and brutality and by mercy brought them into a land of blessing. The God of mercy ("hesed") frees us from our enemies and gives food to every creature. God's mercy, God's loving-kindness, endures forever.

Jesus in his life demonstrated this mercy of God in action. He was often seen eating with tax collectors and sinners. These were people on the fringes of Jewish society. Tax collectors were despised because they cooperated with the Roman occupation and the peacekeeping military. So-called sinners were despised because they didn't keep all the religious rules the Pharisees had developed. People with chronic illnesses and disabilities were also seen as sinners.

More than once Jesus responded to criticism with a quote from Hosea 6:6, "God desires mercy, not sacrifice" (Matthew 9:13; 12:7). In effect, Jesus was saying, "To be merciful to people who are at a disadvantage, vulnerable and at the margins is far more important to God than you coming here on Sunday morning to sing praise to God."

Mennonites have done well in mercy ministry. Through Mennonite Central Committee we have deployed more than 1,200 people around the world in mercy ministries feeding the hungry, sustaining unwanted refugees, educating the poor and advocating for those oppressed by law and culture. Through Ten Thousand Villages we are providing family-sustaining income, often for women at a disadvantage as heads of households.

An ice storm here in Kansas provided unprecedented opportunities for mercy ministry as people shared meals, generators, kerosene heaters and their homes. For one week we suspended the grab-it-all culture for How may I help? Neighbors helped each other clear power lines and clean up branches. In spite of the cold and inconvenience, we felt the kingdom warmth of "Blessed are the merciful."

I believe God wants my church to be a community of mercy. One of our core values says: We hospitably welcome the weak, the suffering and the addicted into our church family as a place of safety, security and healing. We are called by God to welcome people with disabilities, to include people with mental health issues, to love people who have been abused and rejected, to eat with people who have messy lives and are just surviving on the margins of our community.

Life is too short to be preoccupied with just myself. Life is too short to be selfishly focused. Life is too short to try to grab it all for myself. A God-blessed life is a life filled with mercy, not feelings of mercy but actions that provide real help for real people, particularly those on the margins.

The Mennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

First and last witnesses

Good Friday is unique this year since it falls on the same day (March 25) as the Feast of the Annunciation that commemorates the day the angel Gabriel told Mary she was about to conceive the Christ child (Luke 1:31).

After Mary conceived, she went to visit her relative Elizabeth who was also pregnant. The unborn John the Baptist leaped for joy in his mother's womb in acknowledgement of being in the presence of Jesus the Messiah (Luke 1:39-43).

On the day Jesus was crucified one of the men who was to be crucified with him asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom, and Jesus told him that day he would be with him in Paradise.

The first recorded person to recognize Jesus as the Messiah during his earthly existence was an unborn child and the last person to acknowledge him before his death was someone about to be executed. This is significant in light of the early church's opposition to both abortion and the death penalty. This consistent reverence for human life is also characteristic of the peace section of the Mennonite Confession of Faith and of the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership of Pope John Paul II. In the future, when divided Christianity is again united, may it be on the basis of a common commitment to the sanctity of all of human life. *—Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

Inauguration Day

Thank you for "Journal Entry on Inauguration Day" by David B. Miller (Feb. 15). It was thought-provoking and echoed many of the unspoken feelings that I have had during the past year or so. *—Margaret Nunemaker, St. Johns, Mich.*

Had David Miller not identified himself as a frustrated liberal ("Journal Entry on Inauguration Day," Feb. 15) his comments—many of which I find within myself—would have had greater impact. However, where was Miller's column during the two inaugural celebrations for William Jefferson Clinton during whose administration: Bosnia and Somalia occurred; there was greater acceptance by the "in" party at the time for abortion; the poor were similarly distressed; rumors of graft and corruption reigned in the news; and lies—albeit of a different nature—were as prevalent … all while the "party faithful" were celebrating as vigorously in Washington. Was Miller in Washington celebrating in halls lavishly decorated or just at home ignoring similar truths?*—Dennis Boen, Wooster, Ohio*

"Journal Entry on Inauguration Day" was very inspirational. I agree with David Miller. Thank you, David, for putting my own thoughts into *The Mennonite*. What you said takes "guts."*—Roy Miller, Millersburg, Ohio*

Fear of feeling

As a leader in the congregation where Martha Ann Burgard had a very hurtful experience ("A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite," Jan. 18) I wish to respond. While I am not the leader that Martha feels wrongly reprimanded her, I did help set what we felt were necessary boundaries in our relationship. I stand by the decisions we made for reasons I cannot discuss in a forum such as Readers Say. I am continuing to cultivate a friendship with Martha and still deal with the issues of boundaries in our relationship. It is my heartfelt desire to be the friend she needs. If the readers of this column would know Martha and me personally, I sincerely believe we would have the readers' wholehearted goodwill and prayer support.*—Name withheld by request*

I could relate to "A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite." I have often wondered where the passion—the feeling—is within the Mennonite church. I cannot ponder my own salvation without remembering where I was, and I cannot remember where I was without a complete and utter feeling of gratitude, pain and joy.

I know I was lost and Jesus saved me. Someone who has never strayed, never tasted the bitterness of the "other side" will not recognize the stench for what it is and will probably not feel the need to raise their hands, sing their heart out or cry tears of pain and thankfulness.

In my church virtually no one considers themselves "born again" except in my household. It is like being rescued from a burning building. I went

IN THIS ISSUE

Elaine Bryant calls it "Resurrection Day" instead of Easter "because it was not a Roman goddess (from which the word Easter is derived) who was crucified, buried and raised to eternal life" (page 8). Bryant's article offers words from songwriters over the years whose lyrics capture "the difference that day made." For the remaining weeks of Lent and Holy Week, Christine Sine describes the rhythms of life Jesus modeled; she reminds us that the Sabbath is the weekly reminder of Jesus' resurrection (page 12). In "Once Dead River," Chad Mason describes another kind of resurrection: his favorite trout stream. Minnesota's Root River gets smaller along the way and eventually disappears into limestone bedrock—only to emerge from Mystery Cave miles downstream cooled and clarified. May this year's Holy Week and Easter once again clarify for us the difference Jesus' life, death and resurrection makes in our lives.*—Editors* to the burn ward, was treated and released. I still have scars but they are not obvious. I keep trying to mount a rescue mission to get the others still inside the house, but no one seems to think anyone is still alive. How can I not be passionate about this? It seems like being Mennonite is an intellectual experience, not the sensual experience that faith is for many.—*Cindi Newcomb, Marion, S.D.*

Damascus Road a bad idea

Re "A Decade on Damascus Road" (Feb. 15): Damascus Road is a bad idea for several reasons.

First and most importantly, it is attempting to change a church—that is 95 percent white, mostly Swiss-German ethnic Mennonite—with a few workshops. The only way to change the church is to drastically increase the percentage of members who are black, Hispanic, Asian. Having a few tokens in church positions is just frustrating for all concerned if these people don't have a solid constituency and member base.

Second, the only way to drastically increase the percentage of nonwhite members is a serious and sustained effort at evangelism and church planting in the cities. If the Mennonite church wants to spend billions of dollars building fancy facilities for moribund Mennonite churches in the hinterland, it will reap just what it sows. On the other hand, if it gives all that dough to people who have a proven track record of church planting in the cities, like Eastern Mennonite Missions, it will get results. In addition to church planting there are a number of educational institutions like Philadelphia Mennonite High School or Chicago Mennonite Learning Center that need a solid and reliable endowment so they can continue doing their jobs.

Third, Damascus Road is now institutionally implanted in Mennonite Central Committee. Although MCC has done a lot of good works, it is horribly frightened of the word "evangelism." MCCers are nice people, but they wouldn't know how to start a church if their lives depended on it.

If the Mennonite church seriously wants to be "antiracist," it will put its money where its mouth is, and its mouth had better be in the city.—*Ross L. Bender, Philadelphia*

Transportation is a justice issue

Layton Friesen's "An Ode to Walking" (Jan. 18) was too kind to auto-centric North Americans. The auto is an insidious idol that I accepted as uncritically as breathing until my 30s. In the last year I've had no personal vehicle and have become a dedicated user of transit systems and my own biped facilities. Now the idea of driving everywhere or anywhere seems ludicrously wasteful.

In Maryland, nearly 40 percent of the population has no driver's license. Yet a gargantuan share of state finances must go to "infrastructure" to promote single-occupancy vehicle use, including new roadways that inevitably soil everything in their paths.

Since owning and operating a car requires a minimum of $6,000 a year, there is no hope that anyone can come off welfare and earn enough to be a car owner. So less-fortunate citizens inevitably rely on transit to get to any job that might be fortunate to exist near transit stops. Meanwhile, wealthy white citizens and politicians in the suburbs always complain about any funding that mass transit receives and only suffer to put up with a shoestring allotment in order to unclog the rush-hour commute. —*Paul R. Schlitz Jr., Baltimore*

Looking for farm deferments

During World War II, all young men were subjected to a draft for military service. Local draft boards determined various classifications. For a study, we wish to correspond with Mennonite and Amish men who had farm deferments (classification II) during the years 1941-1945.

To participate, please contact me by mail at Goshen College, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. Phone is 574-533-7574, and email is aarecht11@juno.com—*Al Albrecht, Goshen, Ind.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Regarding Mennonite Church USA's health-care access initiative:

○ I support the initiative (31%)

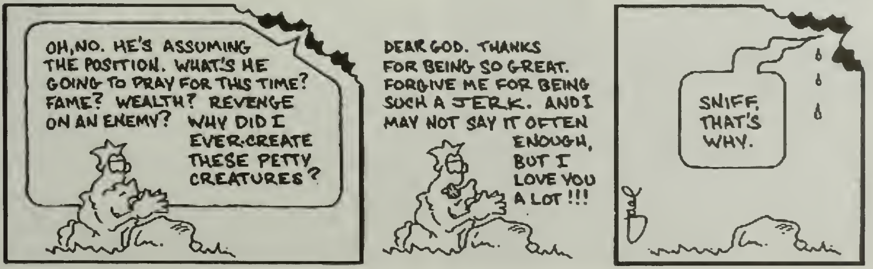
○ I do not support it (23%)

○ I have heard about it but not seen it (12%)

○ What is the health-care access initiative? (35%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


OH, NO. HE'S ASSUMING THE POSITION. WHAT'S HE GOING TO PRAY FOR THIS TIME? FAME? WEALTH? REVENGE ON AN ENEMY? WHY DID I EVER CREATE THESE PETTY CREATURES?
DEAR GOD. THANKS FOR BEING SO GREAT. FORGIVE ME FOR BEING SUCH A JERK. AND I MAY NOT SAY IT OFTEN ENOUGH, BUT I LOVE YOU A LOT!!!
SNIFF. THAT'S WHY.

IN BRIEF

Bluffton chapel attendance increases

Bluffton (Ohio) University's Thursday Chapel has experienced an increase in student attendance this year. Randy Keeler, Bluffton's campus pastor, estimates average attendance at about 250, almost capacity for the hall. Keeler says, "Our chapel attendance has remained strong because the students see it as their own. A dedicated and diversified chapel planning committee consisting of mostly students, with a few staff and faculty, adds to the sense of ownership." Statistics, however, show that if Bluffton had a larger worship facility, attendance likely would increase. *—Bluffton University*

CO sentenced to military prison

U.S. Marine Cpl. Joel D. Klimkewicz, a Seventh-day Adventist, was sentenced Dec. 14, 2004, to seven months in a military prison after being denied status as a conscientious objector. Klimkewicz, 24, was convicted for refusing to obey an order to pick up a weapon, claiming his newfound religious beliefs prevented him from doing so. He received a bad conduct discharge, a penalty given typically to thieves, brawlers and the disobedient. *—Christianity Today*

Hyattsville guidelines found 'inconsistent'

PITTSBURGH—On March 5, 150 Allegheny Mennonite Conference delegates answered the question, "Is Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church's policy of accepting into membership gay and lesbian Christians who are in committed relationships inconsistent with Mennonite Church USA 'Membership Guidelines'?" Nearly 75 percent (112) said yes while slightly more than 25 percent (38) said no.

"This is an action of counsel and not of discipline," said Enos Tice, chair of the conference's Faith, Life and Procedures Commission. "Now the challenge for us is, Do we need to change the nature of our relationship or not?"

The question of how Allegheny conference should respond to this finding will be addressed at the conference's annual meeting Aug. 4-7.

"We need to talk internally about what this means," said Hyattsville pastor Joe Roos. According to the 2005 Mennonite Directory, the congregation currently has 138 members.*—Everett J. Thomas*

Two Asian congregations dedicate buildings

ELKHART, Ind.—Two Mennonite congregations in Asia dedicated new church buildings last month.

The Yayoidai Church in Tokyo, Japan, held its dedication service Feb. 12, replacing a deteriorating meeting place built from post-World War II materials. The congregation, affiliated with Japan Brethren in Christ and Tokyo Area Fellowship of the Mennonite Churches, overfilled the 80-seat sanctuary.

In Taoyuan, Taiwan, the Zhong-Ping (Middle Peace) Mennonite Church dedicated its facilities Feb. 20. Three years ago, this church plant had no members, but about 30 adults attend the church today, with sizable children's and youth groups. In November 2004, the church bought the seventh floor of an office building and converted it into a sanctuary, youth and Sunday-school rooms, a pastor's study and a baby's room.

While the Mission Network closed its work in Taiwan at the end of 1993, Sheldon and Marietta Sawatzky, Mission Network staff members, attend and assist with the Zhong-Ping ministry in Taoyuan, a city of 350,000 people southwest of the capital city, Taipei.*—Mennonite Mission Network*

Jim Bishop

'The most creative event in Mennonite history'

Irvin B. Horst, 89, Paul Peachey, 86, and Calvin Redekop, 79, speak to a Mennonite history and thought class at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., about their involvement in what proved a landmark 12-day meeting that also included John W. Miller, A. Orley Swartzendruber, David A. Shenk and the late John Howard Yoder. All lived in Europe at the time, doing graduate study or postwar work with Mennonite Church agencies. Al Keim, professor emeritus of history at EMU and author of a major biography of the late Mennonite theologian and educator H.S. Bender, called that gathering "the most creative event in Mennonite history." Mary S. Sprunger, professor of history, told the class, "This reunion today of three of those original group members is also a historic event."*—Eastern Mennonite University*

Dustin Combs

Nursing students learn from mock convention

During the 2005 Goshen (Ind.) College Nursing Mock Convention, keynote speaker and department chair Vicky Kirkton (center) speaks with nursing students during a break in the activities. The annual event gives the students real-world experience outside a hospital setting as they debate and vote on some of the more controversial subjects in the field of nursing.*—Goshen College*

'Know Jesus' draws junior high youth, sponsors

HESSTON, Kan.—More than 200 junior high youth and sponsors came to Hesston College Jan. 29 for a biannual event called "Know Jesus." Doug Krehbiel, youth minister for Western District and South Central conferences, says the event helped the youth come to know Jesus better and take another step in their faith journey.

Abigail Epp of Newton, Kan., is one of the youth who says her life was changed that weekend. "In the last session, Luke was having us share about who we felt was close to God," she says. "I talked about my dad, who's been a missionary. I've felt for a long time that God was calling me to be a missionary, but this time I said, 'Yes God, I really want to do this for you.' It might be here or it might be in Africa like my dad, but I said yes to wherever God will send me someday."

Doug says, "We know of at least one new commitment, and when Luke Hartman asked for renewed or continued commitment, every youth stood up. This was tremendously inspiring for us."

Youth and their leaders also experienced immersion in the Anabaptist heritage through the Anabaptist Game, organized and carried out by Michele Hershberger, Hesston College Bible teacher, with a cast of 83 college students.

Traveling in groups of six to 12, participants searched for "safe houses" where Anabaptist leaders told them stories from the Radical Reformation.

"It felt like the whole campus was hosting us, and that helps strengthen college and church ties," says Janet Regier, a youth sponsor from First Mennonite Church in Newton.—*Carol Duerksen*

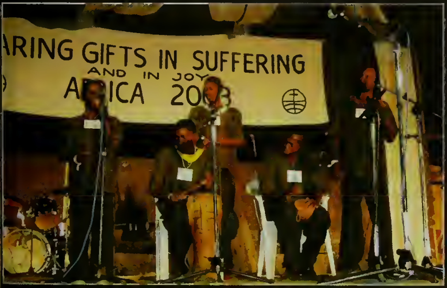
Bethel College celebrates 50 years of opera

NORTH NEWTON, KAN.—Not many small liberal arts colleges can boast the kind of long-lived musical tradition that Bethel College will be celebrating this year.

Each year since 1955, Bethel's theater and music departments have collaborated to produce an opera, operetta or major musical (sometimes more than one in a single season). That 50-year tradition was celebrated on March 12 with a retrospective for all former performers and directors. The performance included selected works and a sing-along.

The first broadly recognized opera given at Bethel, as a collaboration of the music and theater departments, was "Gianni Schicchi" by Puccini, performed during the 1954-55 school year.

The past 50 years have seen more than 80 productions at Bethel. Sometimes there has been both a musical and an opera produced in one year. At other times, two shorter works have been offered during the same performance weekend.—*Bethel College*



CD features Zambian boys discovered by Dutch Mennonite

Praise Sikwangala, Costern Sikwangala, Alexis Sikwangala, Given Mudenda and Gift Mudenda sing at Mennonite World Conference's meeting in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 2003. A CD, "Mwami Pali," featuring the five boys from a village in Zambia, was released March 13. The CD developed after a Dutch Mennonite, Jan Marten de Vries, heard the boys singing under a tree at a Brethren in Christ youth conference in Choma, Zambia. The CD is available for $14 plus postage from MWC, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1, kitchener@mwc-cmm.org.—*Mennonite World Conference*

MDS, Hesston College establish partnership

SEMINOLE, Texas—Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) announced the creation of a disaster-management program in partnership with Hesston (Kan.) College during its annual all-unit meeting Feb. 11-12.

The program will prepare students for careers in the nonprofit or public sector. Kevin King, MDS executive coordinator, said faith-based agencies are recognizing the need for additional trained leadership in managing disaster response.

Hesston's disaster-management major will begin in August. A $5,000 scholarship will be available to eligible students enrolled in the two-year degree program or one-year certificate program. Each scholarship will require a of service with MDS.—*Mennonite Disaster Service*

YES team shares faith in a difficult place

HIMALAYAS—After two months of language study, a four-member Youth Evangelism Service (YES) team working in the Himalayas decided to visit a Monkey Temple near their school.

"We wanted to spend some time worshiping the one true God among the many false gods that were being worshiped," said Ruth H., the team leader from Reading, Pa.

As they quietly sang and worshiped God in a corner of the temple, a man came up and asked if they were singing a Christian song. When they said yes, he said he had recently visited a Christian church and learned about Jesus. The church people had also given him The Jesus film, which he had found interesting.

"We talked with him for a long time," Ruth H. said. "Our national friend who was with us was able to talk with him in greater depth and answer his questions in the local language. The man said he also had a Bible, so we directed him to the New Testament, where he could read about Jesus for himself. We prayed for him, and then another man came up and joined the conversation. It was so encouraging to see their interest and sense that God was using us in this one small way to bless the nations."—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Religious leaders object to torture views of Gonzales

During confirmation hearings for Alberto R. Gonzales as U.S. Attorney General, more than 225 religious leaders—including Christians, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs—signed a letter objecting to his role in developing a narrow definition of torture, which allegedly created the conditions leading to prisoner abuse at Abu Graib and Guantánamo. The letter challenged Gonzales' assertion that some people are not subject to the protections of international law and urged support for protecting fundamental human rights.—*The Christian Century*

Where to find peaceful societies

The Web site www.peacefulsocieties.org was launched Jan. 20 by several academics "as a reference source for students, peace activists, scholars and citizens who are interested in societies that have developed highly nonviolent social conditions." The site contains information on the beliefs of these societies, the ways they maintain their nonviolence and factors that challenge their peacefulness. The Amish are among the groups profiled.—*Messenger*

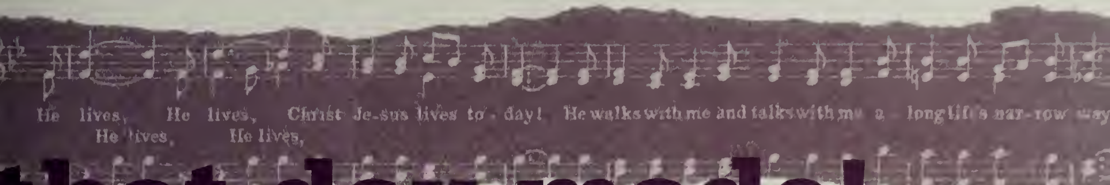
Jesus' resurrection means good news for all who believe in him.

What a difference

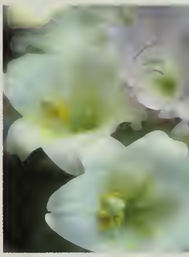
by Elaine Bryant

What day? some may ask. Others may immediately think of Sept. 11, 2001. My husband and daughters have spoken of a day at the end of July in 1991, as "that day." For my family that day was the day a fireman—"driving under the influence"—drove through a red light, causing an accident that totaled my husband's car, left him in a coma for 13 days, caused him to spend two months in a rehab center and left him with impairments that continue to this day.

As life changing as those days were for this nation and our family, respectively, or other days that have impacted you personally, they pale in significance to another day. On that day some women in the area we know as Palestine heard and heeded words that changed time for eternity. Those words are recorded in the Gospel of Matthew: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. … He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. … And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and indeed he is going before you into Galilee, there you will see him. … Behold, I have told you. … So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held him by the feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them. 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me' " (28:5-10 NKJV).


He lives, He lives, Christ Je-sus lives to-day! He walks with me and talks with me a-long life's nar-row way
He lives, He lives,

that day made!



Because of those words on that difference-making day, a songwriter centuries later wrote:

“I serve a risen Savior,
He’s in the world today;
I know that he is living,
Whatever men may say;
I see his hand of mercy,
I hear his voice of cheer,
And just the time I need him
He’s always near.
“Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian
Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs
To Jesus Christ, the King!
The hope of all who seek him
The help of all who find,
None other is so loving,
So good and kind.
“He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way.
He lives, he lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives?
He lives within my heart.”

Many other words have been written about that difference-making day. Other songs have served as catalysts for my thoughts about, gratitude for and celebratory remembrance of that day.

In 1971, Gloria and William Gaither wrote of the importance of that day and the fact that “he lives” to me and countless others. They wrote in the song entitled “Because He Lives”:

“God sent his Son,
they called him Jesus,
He came to love, heal and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
And empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.
Because he lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because he lives all fear is gone;
Because I know he holds the future
And life is worth the living,
Just because he lives.”

Because those who found the grave empty on that day were faithful in following the commands of the risen Savior in their lifetime, those of us who have believed and received him in our time have received pardon for our sins.

While fears may and do come, we don’t have to remain fearful, because he lives. It is written that he said—and God’s Spirit of Truth gently reminds us of his words—“Peace I leave with you. … Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27 NKJV). We are reminded elsewhere it is written that he said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32 NKJV). With such assurances from on high, we can be emboldened to say with faith what David the psalmist said, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me” (23:4 NKJV).

Because God’s uniquely begotten Son and our loving, healing and forgiving Savior overcame death on that day and lives today, our lives are worth living in spite of troubles, heartache and pain. When “we have heard” and responded to “the joyful sound” that “Jesus saves,” we can respond to and act in agreement with the words from the third verse of a song with that declaration as its title. We can

While fears may and do come, we don’t have to remain fearful, because he lives.

“Sing above the battle strife,
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
By his death and endless life,
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!
Sing it softly thro’ the gloom,
When the heart for mercy graves;
Sing in triumph o’er the tomb
Jesus saves! Jesus saves!”

I pray that by God’s gracious enablement I will be as faithful as others have been in declaring what yet another songwriter wrote:

“Jesus saves, to the utmost!
Jesus saves, to the utmost!

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Jesus saves, to the utmost!
He will pick you up
And turn you around,
Hallelujah!
Jesus saves!"

Some call that day Easter; I call it Resurrection Day because it was not a Roman goddess (from which the word Easter was derived) who was crucified, buried and raised for my eternal life. It was Jesus, the Son and Christ of God through the virgin Mary of Nazareth, who lived, died and arose on that day. It is Jesus, the Risen Savior and Lord, who made it possible for the gloom to be broken in my life one Tuesday morning in May 1975. It is Jesus, who, because of that day, is preparing a place for all who have abided and abide in him.

That first Resurrection Day has made a difference in and for this world's accounting of time, as well as in the lives of millions of this world's human occupants for time and eternity.

I know that many have heard and responded to the joyful sound: "Jesus saves!" Some have even responded to the challenges in that song to "spread the tidings all around" and "bear the news to ev'ry land." Some who have heard, however, have not responded to those challenges. For those who have not responded—and those who have—the words from another song speak to us all in the middle of this first decade of this the 21st century.

With the ravages of wars, terrorism in inner cities and foreign lands, social injustices globally, racism, incurable infectious diseases, family breakdowns, ethnic cleansing, enslavement of women and children, earthquakes, destructive winds and waves, human rage, corrupt governments, corporate greed, benign neglect and indifference to the plight of the poor in every land,

"There's a call comes ringing o'er the restless wave …
There are souls to rescue, there are souls to save …
Let us not grow weary in the work of love."

The chorus to this song says in part, "Send the light! The blessed gospel light: Let it shine from shore to shore. Let it shine for evermore!" That gospel light is the good news that Jesus saves because of his life and words, which lead to that difference-making day. Other words from "Send the Light" urge us to pray. Words from another song tell how, for what and to whom we can pray:

"God … whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor thro' the skies
Our grateful songs before thy throne arise.
Thy love divine hath led us in the past
In this free land by thee our lot is cast;
Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide and stay,
Thy word our law, thy path our chosen way.
From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence,
Be thy strong arm our ever strong defense;
Thy true religion in our hearts increase,
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.
Refresh thy people on their toilsome way,
Lead us from night to never ending day;
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine,
And glory, laud, and praise be ever thine."

Finally, there are some who have not yet responded with humility and faith to the reality that Jesus saves. Some have not acknowledged their need for salvation and have not received him, as their personal Savior and Lord. I urge those who have not so responded to receive him today. That first Resurrection Day has made a difference in and for this world's accounting of time, as well as in the lives of millions of this world's human occupants for time and eternity.

On this day let it make a difference in your life by asking the one who rose on that day to be your Savior and Lord. This could be the day after which you can say, "What a difference that day made!"

Elaine Bryant is pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

Betrayal

by Todd Davis

And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a cock crows you will deny me three times."

If it happened here, happened now,
would it be any different? After walking
the better part of 10 days, would Jesus'
words become any more clear? And what

of the crowds who followed like birds
that feed upon garbage, upon the dead
bodies of animals they could not kill
themselves? Betrayal is a word

that begins with such hope, being
itself trapped and then released
by the tongue. Yet it is the downward
slide that ends the word, open mouth,

slack jaw, which tells us what we already
knew about failure. This story turns back
upon itself, a snake that devours its own tail,
like the memory of a face at sunrise, persistent

questions of those who saw as much as I did—
no more than a sideways glance that caught
the eye, reminded us of someone we once knew.

Todd Davis lives in Altoona, Pa.

We got rhythm,

To become a follower of Jesus is an invitation to a life

by Christine Sine

I spent my 41st birthday flat on my back in a hospital bed, thinking I was dying. As medical director of Mercy Ships, I had worked in Africa, Asia and Central and South America organizing outreaches to provide cleft lip and palate, eye surgery and burns surgery to the poor. Often I was overwhelmed by the needs around me and in response ratcheted up my workload to reach out to as many people as possible. I wasn't just burning the candle at both ends but in the middle as well.

Now my body was rebelling. The underlying cause was viral, but I think I was also suffering the penalty of my fast-paced, high-stressed lifestyle. During my long convalescence, I spent a lot of time wondering, Could I have avoided this? The pressure to be involved in church activities and prayer just added to my stress and guilt. Spiritual disciplines disappeared when I felt swamped. My life was out of sync with God's rhythm, and I hadn't even noticed.

Most of us want sacred rhythms that enable us to connect our prayer life to the everyday without being swamped by new time commitments.

Unfortunately, I am not alone. Many Christians are inundated by increased demands on time and resources. God's intended rhythms are blurred by a world that tells us we should never slow down or take a break, and we don't realize how unhealthy our lives are. Cell phones and email link us to friends and colleagues half a world away, 24 hours a day, convincing us that every day beats to a frantic 24-7 rhythm.

These fuzzy boundaries drown out all other rhythms and provide little space for spiritual life. Anxiety, depression and suicide increase. Growing evidence suggests stress and the pressure of overbooked schedules are major contributors. We know physical illnesses such as arthritis, high blood pressure and the common cold are affected by our spiritual well being, and we believe prayer contributes to good health, but it is easier to reach for a pill than turn to our faith for answers.

How do we sift through the many alternatives to find the God-ordained rhythms needed to cope with the pressures and stresses of busy lives? Most of us want sacred rhythms that enable us to connect our prayer life to the everyday without being swamped by new time commitments.

Searching for rhythm in all the wrong places: At a seminar a participant came up to me and announced: "I have a rhythm to my life. There is the Thanksgiving sale, pre-Christmas sale, Easter sale and midsummer sale." Unfortunately she wasn't joking. The secular culture, not her faith, provided the rituals that paced her life.

The church year provides rituals to undergird our faith. Our fear of ritual and the resulting disconnect from a rhythm focused on the life, death and resurrection of Christ has left us open to secular rituals and rhythms that increasingly define who we are. We no longer fast during Lent but instead go on obsessive spring diets. The pattern of our lives is more likely to be set by the gala sales or NFL playoffs than by the celebrations of our faith.

Exploring the Jesus rhythm: Jesus carried the weight of the world on his shoulders. He should have been overwhelmed by the crowds' demands. He could have spent 24 hours a day healing and preaching, yet he never seemed stressed out or overloaded.

Jesus modeled four basic life rhythms for us. At the center was his spiritual life, which flowed out of an intimate, personal relationship to God and provided the focus for all he did. Jesus stopped periodically throughout the day to listen to God and directed his actions according to God's instructions. He never made major decisions without spending at least a night listening through prayer.

Matthew, a Seattle businessman, reordered his life to set aside five minutes four times a day for prayer and reflection. His day begins with a short prayer and a Psalm. On arrival at work he sits in his car and prays for God's love and compassion to flow through him to his colleagues. On the way home, Matthew stops at a view near his home and prays to be God's care and concern to his wife and children. Before bed he reads a Gospel portion, briefly reviews the day's activities and thanks God for what he has accomplished that bares God's seal of approval. He ends with a prayer for needs he has read about in the newspaper, then releases the day to God. Matthew says this practice has revolutionized his life. "Now everything I do feels connected to God and God's purposes."

Embracing community: Jesus' second priority was community. He spent more time developing a family of followers than he did preaching or healing. To become a Christian means to enter into community, first with God but also with God's people, with sisters and brothers from every tribe and

but what kind?

with a different rhythm.

nation and culture. It also means to be drawn into community with the poor, disabled, abandoned and marginalized.

And Jesus and his followers didn't just work together. They enjoyed good food, fellowship and celebration. According to theologian N.T. Wright, wherever Jesus went there was a party. Making time for friends and family, encouraging co-workers and fellow believers, getting involved in ministry among the poor, celebrating faith with lots of fun and fellowship should all be part of our sacred rhythms.

When Susan, a young mother with two children, recognized community as an important Christian rhythm, she reorganized her week to spend more time with other young mothers and their children. She and four friends meet daily in each other's homes. One does childcare while the others clean. Afterward they pray together, read the Scriptures or just talk and laugh over a piece of cake and a cup of coffee. One morning a week they meet in the house of a disabled friend who is unable to do her own housework.

Working for God: The third rhythm that paced Jesus life was work, but not for the daily provision of food—that he encouraged his followers to trust God for. And did he not accumulate wealth. Jesus' work focused on service to God and God's kingdom, and he suggests our work should reflect these priorities as well. We are to bring hope, healing and salvation to those around us.

One family I know has developed a rhythm of service around the seasons of the year. At the beginning of the school year they contribute educational materials to a poor inner-city school. At Thanksgiving they get involved with their children in a local homeless shelter and at Christmas offer hospitality to a solo-parent family in their neighborhood. For the second half of the school year they involve their kids in an after-school tutoring program. In the summer they take two weeks vacation to go as a family on a short-term mission trip.

Learning to rest: It was a great relief when I realized Jesus also recognized rest as an essential life rhythm. He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28 NIV). Regular sleep and Sabbath reconnect us to this refreshing, renewing rhythm. A good night's rest boosts our immune system, and recent research suggests an afternoon siesta increases our productivity so much that we actually accomplish more than when we work all day.

The Sabbath is unique among life's rhythms. It first appeared in the Hebrew Bible. It is the only sacred rhythm with no counterpart in the natural world (*Jewish Days: A Book of Jewish Life and Culture* by Francine Klagsbrun, 1996). For the Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel (*The Sabbath*, 1951) "the essence of the world to come is Sabbath eternal." Every seventh day God's people were meant to glimpse the joy, tranquility, peace and abundance of life in eternity. This should be the culmination and goal of our week when we celebrate the glimpses we have caught of God's new world and rest in the satisfaction of what we have accomplished over the last week that bares the fingerprints of God.

First, we celebrate the joy of our restored fellowship with God. Second, we celebrate our inclusion in that great international community that is Christ's body. In the process, we can rejoice in the ways God has used our gifts and talents in the last week to heal the sick, feed the hungry, preach good news to the poor and bring glimpses of God's eternal world into the lives of others. Third, we celebrate the glorious world that God has created. This is a great day to go for a hike or get out into the garden.

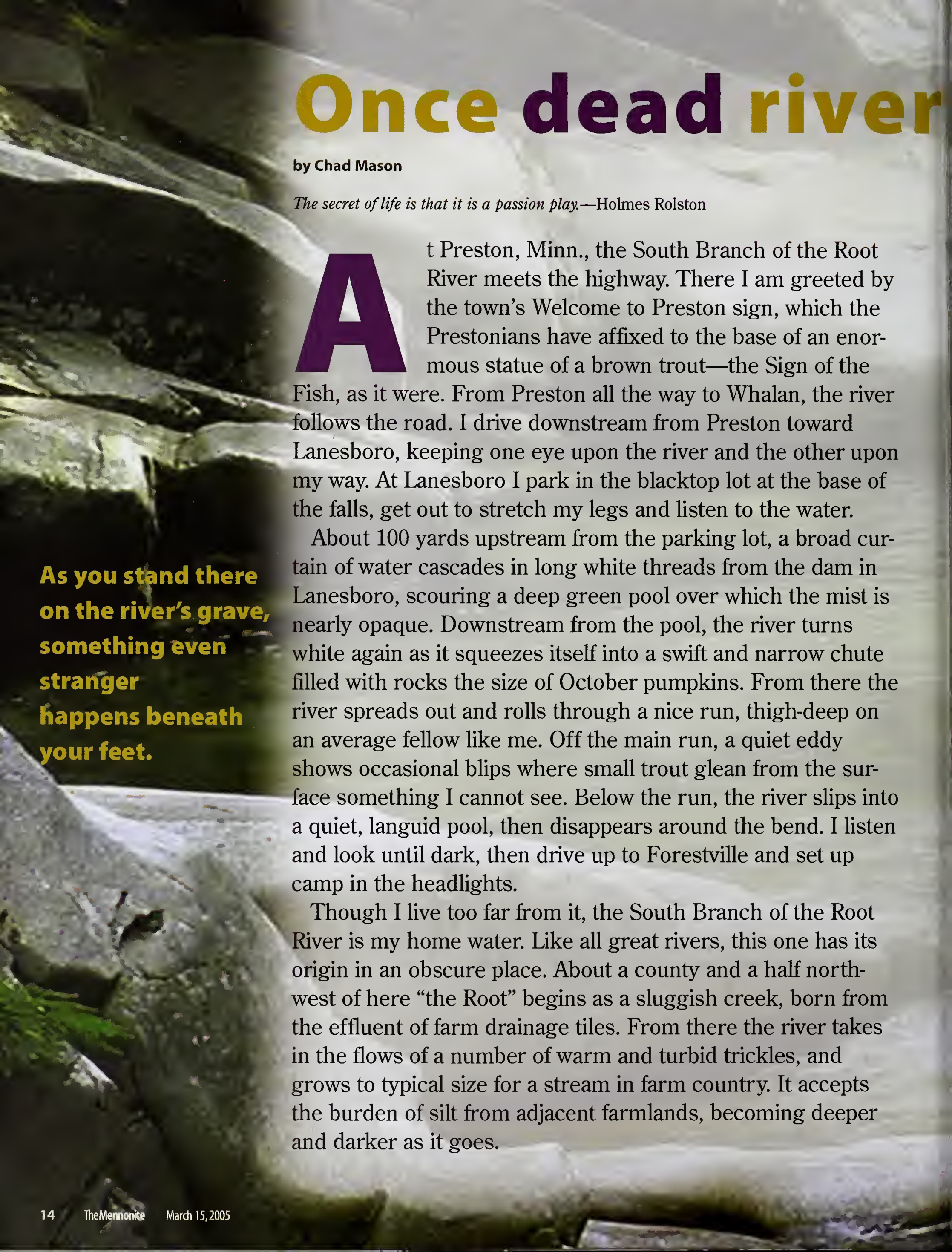
Jesus and his followers didn't just work together. They enjoyed good food, fellowship and celebration.

A friend instituted a "technology Sabbath." One day a week he disconnects from the phone, email and computer. It has done much to decrease the stress in his hectic life and made it easier for him to enter into the joy of God's presence.

John, a young pastor in Denver, told me a businessman asked him: "Why are you always so busy? Don't you think God wants you to model a different way of life?" John was forced to rethink his priorities and the pattern of his life.

To become a follower of Jesus is an invitation to a life with a different rhythm. Get away on a prayer retreat with a friend or your spouse. Examine how you prioritize your time and discover God's sacred rhythms for yourself. Invite God to open a doorway to a more festive, less stressed way of life that is fulfilling and not exhausting. TM

Christine Sine is author of Sacred Rhythms: Finding a Peaceful Pace in a Hectic World *(Baker, 2003).*



Once dead river

by Chad Mason

The secret of life is that it is a passion play.—Holmes Rolston

At Preston, Minn., the South Branch of the Root River meets the highway. There I am greeted by the town's Welcome to Preston sign, which the Prestonians have affixed to the base of an enormous statue of a brown trout—the Sign of the Fish, as it were. From Preston all the way to Whalan, the river follows the road. I drive downstream from Preston toward Lanesboro, keeping one eye upon the river and the other upon my way. At Lanesboro I park in the blacktop lot at the base of the falls, get out to stretch my legs and listen to the water.

About 100 yards upstream from the parking lot, a broad curtain of water cascades in long white threads from the dam in Lanesboro, scouring a deep green pool over which the mist is nearly opaque. Downstream from the pool, the river turns white again as it squeezes itself into a swift and narrow chute filled with rocks the size of October pumpkins. From there the river spreads out and rolls through a nice run, thigh-deep on an average fellow like me. Off the main run, a quiet eddy shows occasional blips where small trout glean from the surface something I cannot see. Below the run, the river slips into a quiet, languid pool, then disappears around the bend. I listen and look until dark, then drive up to Forestville and set up camp in the headlights.

As you stand there on the river's grave, something even stranger happens beneath your feet.

Though I live too far from it, the South Branch of the Root River is my home water. Like all great rivers, this one has its origin in an obscure place. About a county and a half northwest of here "the Root" begins as a sluggish creek, born from the effluent of farm drainage tiles. From there the river takes in the flows of a number of warm and turbid trickles, and grows to typical size for a stream in farm country. It accepts the burden of silt from adjacent farmlands, becoming deeper and darker as it goes.

Signs of death and resurrection on a fishing trip

Then something passing strange happens; the river gets smaller. I say this is strange because everyone knows this is not how streams ordinarily behave. Streams get larger as they progress and eventually become rivers through a cumulative process of consumption of tributaries. But at just the point where you expect it to follow the usual path to bona fide riverdom, the Root surprises you. It goes on a quick slide toward oblivion, pouring itself into the earth through cracks in the limestone bedrock. After just a few miles, you can tell the Root is going to die altogether. A few miles more, and all that remain of the Root are deerflies buzzing over coon tracks in the mud. And there you are—standing on the grave of a river.

But as you stand there on the river's grave, something even stranger happens beneath your feet. Deep in the bowels of Fillmore County the Root cools and clarifies. Then its waters issue forth again, as a trout stream, from a black hole called "Mystery Cave" near Forestville.

From there on, the river rushes over limestone and carves deep valleys between rocky bluffs. Along the river you can find pieces of the bluffs and, in the pieces, fossils. They are brachiopods, little shellfish that once lived on the floor of a shallow, ancient sea. They have been locked in darkness ever since the sea's extinction, waiting for the river to bring them to light as it descends to the realm of all the dead. Now exposed to the sunlight, they are pulled free and taken home by barefooted children on summer days.

I wake at dawn and fish all day. When evening comes I see the first caddis flies rise aloft, signaling the onset of a hatch. The caddis larvae are little worms the color of freshly peeled ginger root. They carry their coffin-like houses—which they spin from a mixture of river sand and their own secretions—on their backs and cling for dear life to the rocks in the oxygen-rich whitewater. When the time is right, they entomb themselves to pupate. During a hatch, millions of pupae ride tiny bubbles of gas to the surface, where the worm disappears and a winged thing appears in its place.

It all sounds so beautiful when narrated this way, one may be tempted to forget that thousands perish—smothered by silt or eaten alive by hungry trout or stillborn in their pupal shucks or drowned in the last few seconds before their wings dry. Even those who take flight are not done with travail. Many become fodder for the swallows and bats that flutter over the river. But by some inscrutable mercy, some caddis flies reach the streamside vegetation and live long enough to mate. After mating—which takes place in midair above the river—the female returns to the water, where she spends herself to perpetuate her kind, diving toward the bottom to deposit her eggs in the last few seconds of her short life.

To a trout, the meaning of all this is simply food. The fish aren't entirely safe, either. Great blue herons wait in static stealth along the shorelines, watching for careless trout. And a trout never knows which caddis fly is a bogus copy hiding a hook. That, after all, is what I'm doing here. A hatch means food for the fisherman, too.

I tie on a Henryville Special, number 16, olive caddis fly. It is a beautiful concoction of feathers and fur, with a curve of sharpened bronze running through its middle. Whether you release your trout or not—and I usually do—there's no denying that a hook's original purpose is bound up with death. The caddis flies, the bats, the trout, the herons and the fisherman—we all inhabit a river where life is purchased at the price of death. The river itself shares the cost with us, for its death has established the web of life in which we all participate.

When a fisherman puts an instrument of death at the core of his art, he does more than merely tie a fly; he tells the truth about the world, the truth about himself.

When a fisherman puts an instrument of death at the core of his art, he does more than merely tie a fly; he tells the truth about the world, the truth about himself.

Upstream is the pierced side of a mountain, where everything begins. From there the river is always coming to meet me, yet always running away. Downstream many miles, the river stops running where it meets the sea. In between, all that indwell the river reenact the story of its death. Perhaps that will not always be so, but for now it is. And so, while the bats fly through swarms of caddis, I thread the truth onto a fine line and ply the waters of a once dead river.

Chad Mason is ministry coordinator at Christ Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa.

Communities
Pursuing
Christ's
Purpose

SEVENTH IN A SERIES
RECONCILIATION

WALLS broken down

by Laurie L. Oswald

Bethel College interterm participants peer over a dividing wall in the Middle East.

Having Jewish roots isn't something that wins Jonathan Nathan's understanding on the Kansas prairies. So when he participated in Bethel College's Jerusalem Seminar in the Holy Lands, he finally felt at home—even though walls of misunderstanding deeply divide Arabs and Israelis.

The three-week trip led by Patty Shelly, professor of Bible and religion at the North Newton, Kan., school, didn't give Jonathan Nathan easy answers for how people should demolish those walls. But it helped him better to accept his heritage—Jewish and Mennonite—and see more clearly how to be a peacemaker in a violent world and weave family traditions into a new future for himself.

"In the Middle East, I finally was where it was cool to be Jewish," says Jonathan, a freshman from Moundridge, Kan., who took the trip with six other Bethel students. "When we moved from California to Kansas, it was the first time I realized people had a problem with my ethnicity. ... In California, everyone is different, so it didn't really matter.

"But once we moved, I constantly felt the pressure of wondering what people were thinking and I got really tired of the Jewish jokes. ... Finally, I could just let down and be myself among a lot of other people who were just like me."

While finally at home, he says, "it made me really sad to see how scared everyone is. Arabs believe Jews hate them, and Jews believe the Arabs hate them. ... But they really do have a lot in common. They are all Semitic people. They all have the blood of Abraham."

It's the same blood that flows in his own veins. His father, Sanford, is Jewish, and his mother, Kristin Zerger, is Mennonite, and they met in California in the 1970s while doing peace work. Jonathan's parents represent a microcosm of the land the group visited, which for centuries has been home to Jews, Muslims and Christians attempting to work and worship side by side amid drastic differences and bloodshed.

A fellow participant, Annie Hasan, a Bethel junior, lived in Jordan until she was 14 in an interfaith home with a Muslim father and a Christian mother, although she identifies most strongly with the Muslim faith. The other students, including Shawn Rath, a junior from Moundridge, identify strongly with Christianity, even though he is also about a quarter Jewish ancestry through a grandfather.

He and Jonathan became friends in Moundridge, where they attended Eden Mennonite Church.

Shawn Rath

Jewish and Mennonite: Jonathan Nathan (right) with a long-lost cousin in Jerusalem.

NO
WALLS
BRIDGES

Shawn Rath

As they trekked through Jordan, Palestine and Israel—spending most of their time in Jerusalem—they walked in the footsteps of Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, attended a Jewish Sabbath service on Friday, listened to Muslims praying at the Dome of the Rock and ate meals with the extended families of Annie and Jonathan. They also visited Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers in Jordan, Jerusalem and Bethlehem and talked with Christian Peacemaker Teams workers in Hebron.

Seminar stretches leader's soul: The trip stretched Patty, who has led this seminar every other year for 20 years, but never with the diversity of this group, she says. Bethel gave Patty a leave of absence (1996-2000) to serve with MCC in Jerusalem.

"I've loved leading this seminar, because it's a deep Christian pilgrimage where you can walk and pray and sing where Jesus walked and prayed," she says. "This time, I had to let go of focusing exclusively on the Christian aspects and create space where all the students could find what they needed ... in their own spiritual journeys."

Those journeys touched Patty in new ways, as she witnessed how being in this land gave her students a new sense of being. The group traveled to the village where Annie's father grew up and where only the foundations of her grandfather's house remain. Annie is studying abroad in Jordan.

"We drove to that village, Al Qubab, where the Israelis drove villagers out of the hills in 1948 and built a new village on top of it," Patty says. "Annie's family were refugees but the foundations of the house are still there, next to the site of an Israeli war memorial."

Painful for Patty was seeing how the Israelis have attempted to create "peace" by building a "security wall" that snakes through sections of Jerusalem, dividing the Palestinian West Bank from the rest of the city. She still has many friends in Jerusalem who tell her how much the wall has broken community life and trust.

"The wall, with its 9- by 12-feet concrete slabs, snakes through olive groves and divides farmers from their fields, families from their families, shopkeepers from their customers and in some cases, workers from their jobs," Patty says.

"Unless the wall can secure just and reconciled relationships, it will eventually fail in its purpose to bring peace. ... Just like any wall that divides people, it must fall. ... But it promises to bring many hardships in the next months and years."

Captured memories of division and healing: Shawn, designated photographer for the group, captured more than 600 images of the trip—images of the concrete slabs that divide people and also the healing of the soul that unites people. He captured forever the joy spreading across Annie's face as she stood on the patch of soil where her grandfather found, then lost, his dreams.

He watched his longtime friend Jonathan lose his self-consciousness as he walked throughout Jerusalem and reunited with two long-lost cousins. And he brought home images that remind him of his own spiritual commitment to peacemaking. The trip gave him a deeper gratitude for Mennonite Church USA, which provides a focus on peace for young people.

The trip also solidified for Shawn his own calling toward being involved in service and peacemaking after college—hopefully in the Middle East.

"I grew up Mennonite, and I cannot even begin to tell you how privileged that makes me feel," Shawn says. "When I walked where Jesus walked and sat where he spoke to the crowds, I was overwhelmed with a sense of how important the Sermon on the Mount is for Christians, especially Mennonites. ... He said blessed are the meek and the downtrodden and the poor and neglected. ... And if I can touch just one person's life and make that better, that will be enough for me."

Laurie L. Oswald is News Service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Patty Shelly

Spiritual pilgrimages: Annie Hasan (center) with her extended Palestinian family.

What if we didn't save our dying until the end?

Marlene Kropf is minister of worship, congregational and ministerial leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

At a recent lunch table conversation, someone asked, "What do you suppose happens when Christians go from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday without an experience of Holy Week between?"

The question prompted a spirited discussion. Does it make any difference if we skip the dark part of the story? Is our faith endangered or likely to be distorted if we don't show up at church during Holy Week?

Easter is the high point of the Christian year, the bright beginning of 50 days of extravagant celebration. As Laurence Hull Stookey notes in *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church* (Abingdon, 1996), "The explosive force of the resurrection of the Lord is too vast to be contained within a celebration of one day."

To prepare for that joyride of 50 days, however, the church has wisely called us to pass though the valley of the shadow of death during Holy Week. Although we make valiant efforts to deny death and its power in North America, the stark reality is that none of us escapes. All of us will die someday. Is it possible that the yearly descent into Holy Week is a necessary preparation for our own death?

Participating in Holy Week services is one way to begin our dying before the end comes.

Liminal space: To consider our own death requires entering into liminal space—a shadowy passage between what is known and what is unknown. It means standing naked and utterly alone at a threshold where we peer into deep darkness. Instead of averting our eyes from our mortality, it means imagining the decay of our bodies, letting the slow, certain knowledge of our final helplessness seep into us. It means facing the undeniable truth of our end.

An axiom of the spiritual life is that all transformation takes place in liminal space. We cannot grow from one degree of glory into another without enduring the uncertainty of leaving what is familiar or secure and waiting for what is new to be revealed. Just as the death of winter is necessary for the green shoots of spring to emerge, so the soul's rhythm requires dying and rising. The apostle Paul affirmed, "We have been buried with [Christ] by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead … we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Dying is a necessary prelude to rising.

Confession: One way we practice inhabiting liminal space in worship is in the act of confession. Each time we confess our sin, we die just a little. In manageable doses, we let go of our illusions of perfection or self-sufficiency and risk opening ourselves to transformation. For a few brief moments each week, we cast aside our bravado and speak the humble truth that before God all our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

But Holy Week is a whole week of liminal space—the real stuff, the stern stuff. We walk alongside Jesus, the only person who was truly good—the beloved Child of God—and see him mocked, stripped, beaten and crucified. In the anguish of dying, he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" If we are strong enough to wait at the cross, we find within ourselves an answering terror. Are we also unprotected? Will we also be abandoned at the hour of our death? It is no wonder that we don't show up at church to hear such a story.

But what if death is not the end? What if, instead, death and resurrection are a natural and expected rhythm, a lifelong spiritual rhythm? What if the only way to life is through the grave? Such a conviction is the heart of Christian faith. Yet we may be inclined to give such a conviction mere lip service. What if the ancient confession—"Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again"—is meant to form and shape every day of our lives until we become cruciform?

None of us can manage such courageous living alone. But the good news is that dying and rising is the vocation of the whole Christian community, not just individual Christians. We need new life. The church needs new life. As Fred Pratt Green says, "The church of Christ, in ev'ry age … must keep on rising from the dead" (HWB 403).

Participating in Holy Week services is one way to begin our dying before the end comes. Perhaps we'll get the hang of it and be able to say, finally, like Jesus, "Into your hands I commit my spirit." And there, in God's gracious hands, we will be brought to life again.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Making peace with evangelism**—Amy Spencer
- **Faith journey**—Jennifer Szambecki
- **Church hopping**—Karen Nofziger

Anabaptist Institute helps 1,000-plus

Hispanic program will expand to serve Native American congregations.

Consuelo Moreno, with four children but little money or education, felt called to study the Bible to better serve her congregation at La Puente, Calif. But with scant resources, she faced a closed door. That's when she heard about Instituto Biblico Anabautista (IBA).

Today she is a graduate of the program that established a study center in her congregation. Through IBA, she and many other Hispanics with few funds have found a gold mine of biblical and theological training.

"I tried to enroll in other institutions and asked the Lord to help me be accepted, but the doors were always closed," Moreno says. "IBA was good for me as a mother of four children, because I did not have to leave home to study. Our weekly class day was on a day I already came to church, so I didn't have to alter my schedule. The studies are practical, and the material is self-taught and easy to understand. I could make it."

José Elizalde, IBA instructor at Houston Mennonite Church, where he is also pastor, sees firsthand the empowerment of people like Consuelo. They change from people who face immovable walls to those who walk into a new future with God.

"IBA provides theological education without breaking people's pockets," Elizalde says, "and without making them relocate to a school faraway from their homes. And since the studies are in their local congregation, from day one they begin to practice what they're learning. So many of the students tell us how much IBA has changed their lives and how they are so eager to learn and how grateful for the opportunity to study."

Elizalde, who writes curriculum and is an instructor for IBA, is part of a three-member staff that includes Gilberto Flores, director, and Violeta Ajquejay, coordinator. IBA has 23 centers available to 115 Spanish-speaking congregations throughout the United States and Canada.

Participants study independently and in groups and can receive a certificate for two years of study or a diploma for four years of study. Often those who participate are already serving in their congregations as Sunday school teachers, worship leaders and deacons. Others are already pastors or church planters.

The program, begun in 1988, has benefited more than 1,000 Hispanic students with the help of 25 volunteer tutors each year. Now IBA will open its doors even wider because of a new partnership begun Feb. 1 between Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership team and Mennonite Mission Network. Mission Network will continue to support IBA as one of its programs, but IBA staff will be part of the Executive Leadership team. That team focuses on finding and developing new leaders through its Culture of Call activities. IBA will continue what it has done for 15 years: working to build closer ties to all racial-ethnic groups in congregations and area conferences.

It also wants to form closer bonds with the Hispanic Mennonite Church, a constituent group of the denomination that works closely with Hispanic congregations.

"This program trains more pastors and church leaders per dollar spent than any other program I know," says Peter Graber, senior executive of Missional Church Advancement for Mennonite Mission Network.

"This partnership symbolizes the denomination's commitment and sensitivity about those groups often less served," says Flores. "Our methodology places first priority on relating well to the people we serve. In our Hispanic culture that is particularly important, but in any culture caring about people is effective because we live in a society that can be linear and structured and can lack human warmth."

In 2005, for the first time, IBA is offering its program to English-speaking students from Native American congregations in a partnership with Gulf States Mennonite Conference.

We are gaining some new visibility within congregations and area conferences," says Ajquejay, who has worked with IBA since its inception. "That connection brings us a little closer to the people we want to serve and introduces us to new opportunities to serve."*—Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

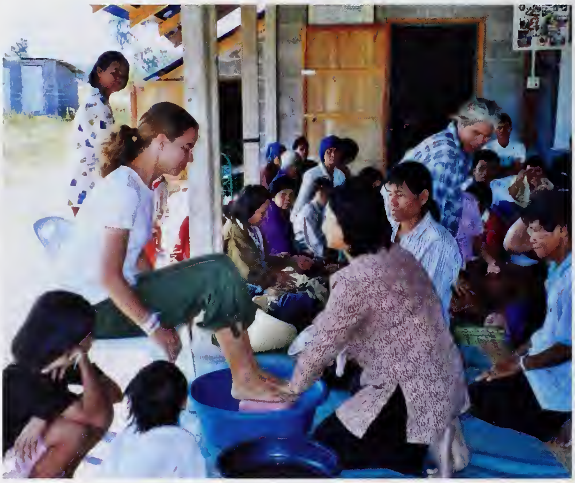
This program trains more pastors and church leaders per dollar spent than any other program I know.
—Peter Graber

From left, Gilberto Flores, director of Instituto Biblical Anabautista, with his staff, Violeta Ajquejay, coordinator, and José Elizalde, instructor and curriculum writer.

Laurie L. Oswald

Foot washing crosses cultural barriers

YES worker in Thailand is blessed with unexpected send-off after internship.



Renee Shenk

At Cheryl Derksen's farewell, after a year-long mission internship in Thailand, Daeng, a house group leader from Det Udom, washes her feet and gives a farewell blessing.

When Cheryl Derksen returned to Thailand for a year-long mission internship in early 2004, she knew she'd be taking a deeper step into the lives of the Thai people. And that's what she wanted. Her appetite for service had been whetted during a five-month term with Youth Evangelism Service (YES) there the previous year.

This time she delved more seriously into Thai language study. She worked with the Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) team to set up an accounting system for the church's microeconomic development program, and she even got her feet muddy while planting rice.

The 12 house churches that have grown out of EMM's work in northeast Thailand are composed primarily of the rural, rice-farming Isaan people.

"I thought I was coming to bless and serve the Thai people," Derksen told the EMM board on Feb. 4. "But I never expected to be so blessed myself."

She said that in 2003, when their YES team left, one of her team members felt strongly that God was asking them to wash the feet of the Isaan church leaders—literally.

"Now if you know anything about Thai culture," Derksen said, "you know how inappropriate and unclean feet are considered to be. For us to even suggest something like foot washing seemed foolish and culturally insensitive.

"We told our Thai pastor what we were sensing, and he shared this with the leadership council during one of their meetings. After his explanation, we started to wash the council members' feet, but it was extremely awkward.

"These leaders are rice farmers. They hadn't washed their feet before coming—like we'd have done to prepare for a foot-washing service. And they walk dusty roads every day.

"But as we started to wash their dirty, calloused feet, they started to cry. This was surprising, because Thai people rarely cry. Some of them had to leave the room to gain control. And we started to cry. It was a powerful experience. We knew we had heard and obeyed God."

Two years later, when Derksen had completed her mission internship, she wanted a quiet goodbye. After the typical Isaan string-tying ceremony—symbolizing the way friends are tied to one another in love and friendship—she was shocked to see someone bring in a chair and a tub of water.

"I wanted to protest," Derksen said, "but I sensed the Lord telling me, 'Sit down and let them bless you.'

"The pastor explained the biblical story about foot washing to this group, which had not been present when the YES team washed the council members' feet. Six people, representing different aspects of church life, came and lovingly washed my feet.

"It was powerful and moving to feel them touching my feet. They were crossing enormous cultural barriers to serve and bless me. And I will never be the same."

Derksen, from Winkler, Man., is a member of the Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church. Since returning from Thailand, she is serving as an administrative assistant at the Harrisburg (Pa.) Discipleship Center—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

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Easter eggs have Bible verses inside

Mission Network workers teach Japanese about Jesus' resurrection with hunt.

Mike and Teresa Sherrill could be the Peter Cottontails of Japan. But along with the "jelly beans for Tommy," they bring baskets full of Bible verses.

For the third straight year the Sherrills, representing Mennonite Mission Network, will host an Easter afternoon egg hunt March 27 for their Japanese friends and neighbors, thanks in part to boxes full of plastic eggs airmailed down the bunny trail from First Mennonite Church of Upland, Calif., and Grace Hill Mennonite Church of Whitewater, Kan.

Last year, community children scrambled through the Fukuzumi Mennonite Center seeking more than 400 eggs. This year, children will scour the nooks and crannies of Shiroishi Mennonite Church, where the Sherrills have attended since June 2004. Eggs will be hidden under the cushions that replace chairs for some worshipers, in planters and bookcases, in the pulpit, in hallways and in the genkan, where visitors exchange shoes for slippers.

Eggs traditionally were pagan symbols of the universe and fertility, but after Christianity became the dominant religion in Western culture, leaders adopted the Easter egg as a symbol of rebirth and Christ's resurrection. In Japan, Easter eggs truly are a foreign concept, the Sherrills say. In fact, the biggest obstacle was finding enough plastic shells, which are rare in Japan. The Sherrills worked with Jeff Wright of Pacific Southwest Conference and First Mennonite Church of Upland. They also found a connection with Grace Hill in Kansas. Diana Schunn organized the Grace Hill junior Sunday school classes, which donated several hundred colorful orbs and shipped them to the Sherrills in several plastic tubs.

"The kids were more surprised than anything that they didn't have the eggs (in Japan)," Schunn says. "Although it is a secular part of the Easter tradition, I think the kids just saw it as sharing some of the U.S. traditions and part of the whole Easter process. It's a nontraditional outreach, but I think it's a really neat idea."

Teresa Sherrill says egg hunts in Sapporo truly are religious events. When children crack open the plastic shells, they will find personalized Scripture cards packed beside homemade sweets. Past hunts also have included Easter bingo and other games, a time for singing, puppet shows and the story of Christ's death and resurrection illustrated by colorful storyboards or videos.

"The average person doesn't understand the real meaning of the symbolism of the cross," Teresa Sherrill says. "Death on the cross for sin and resurrection from death by Jesus are much more difficult realities for Japanese to embrace."

Mike Sherrill

Teresa Sherrill (upper right) and a group of children rejoice that they found their eggs during an annual Easter egg hunt the Sherrills organize in Sapporo, Japan.

Ooyama Sensei, pastor of Shiroishi Mennonite Church, says video games have made the resurrection more difficult to understand for Japanese children. Many children spend hours playing video games where those killed, called yomigaeru—the same word Christians use for "resurrection"—come back to life. So typical children think of a violent video game when they hear the term "yomigaeru," Sensei says, which means Christians must teach children about the difference between the true resurrection and the one on the video screen.

To help educate local children, egg hunt organizers will pass out invitations at local elementary schools on Good Friday.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference
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April 7-9, 2005

Historical persecutors have asked to reconcile with present day Anabaptists from all backgrounds and denominations. Everyone with Anabaptist heritage is invited to join Swiss Reformed leaders for a powerful time of reconciliation and restoration.

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HIV/AIDS threatens poverty solutions

MEDA is gathering examples of integration of HIV/AIDS with microfinance.

Everyone knows HIV/AIDS is a killer, a global monster that is ravaging millions. In Africa it is a heterosexual menace—the single largest slayer of people aged 18 to 49. In Mozambique, one place where Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) works, the disease has hit 17 percent of the population of 19 million.

HIV/AIDS isn't just a health crisis, but an economic crisis. It is fed by poverty and spins off new poverty. Most African businesses are suffering its effects—from high health costs for employees to absenteeism. Hit hardest are those 18 to 49. An entire generation of productive workers is being lost.

MEDA staff have wrestled with a business response to HIV/AIDS. As an agency that specializes in business-oriented solutions to poverty, how can its expertise be most effectively deployed? One way is by gathering examples of successful integration of HIV/AIDS and microfinance programming and devising tools to address the economic dimension.

MEDA technical adviser Pauline Achola is one of a core of 10 people from SEEP (Small Enterprise and Education Promotion) member organizations who are putting together an HIV/AIDS guide based on information from microfinance institutions (MFIs) dealing with the disease. It will highlight promising practices, propose MFI program designs that take HIV/AIDs into consideration and work at ways to measure results.

Another MEDA effort is a seminar slated for Tanzania early in 2005 in which some 20 MFI practitioners will share ideas on how they are coping. The seminar will ask how other agencies have dealt with the stigma of HIV/AIDS, what lending policies avoid discriminating against infected or affected clients without putting the institution at risk, and what solutions have worked in other countries.

MFIs acknowledge that the crisis is "a time bomb" waiting to explode, says Sandra Getuba, an intern working on this issue for MEDA in Mozambique. But, she says, they lack enough information, tools and capacity to implement effective solutions.

"It's our hope that we can share the lessons learned by other organizations and help jump-start a first step toward dealing with the issue," she says.—*MEDA*

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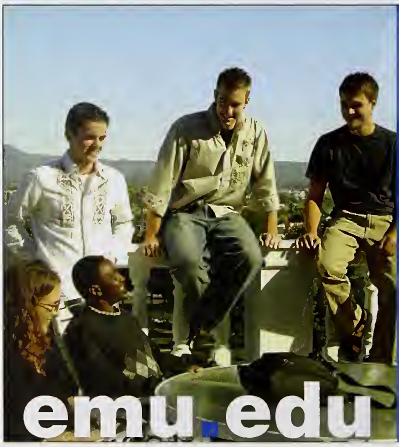

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MWC plans 'mini-assembly' for 2006

Mennonite World Conference budget ends with deficit due to weak U.S dollar.

In about one year's time, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ in North America will have an opportunity to sample a Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly on a small scale.

Expanding MWC General Council, Peace Council and Faith and Life Council business sessions to include an MWC "mini-assembly" is being considered.

The proposal for the mini-assembly, which will be held at the U.S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena, Calif., March 9-15, 2006, was affirmed by MWC senior executive and staff members who met in Fresno, Calif., in late January. The mini-assembly will reflect the global character but not the numbers of a traditional assembly.

Council members represent MWC member churches from each of five continental regions.

The councils meet for one week in conjunction with global assemblies, like the most recent one held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 2003, and at about the midpoint between assemblies. The next assembly will be in 2009 in Paraguay.

Official hosts for the event are the Brethren in Christ General Conference, Mennonite Church USA and the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches.

Southern California churches will be local hosts for some 200 people, including council members from around the world, MWC staff and international and North American guests. Some participants from churches in the U.S. and Canada are also anticipated.

Congregations will be offered the opportunity to sponsor and host a council member from another country. Such sponsors may be able to send one observer from their church to the sessions as meeting space allows. Material on how to participate will be sent to congregations as details develop.

The local host group is ethnically diverse. For example, the 1,500 members of Mennonite churches in the area are 90 percent non-Caucasian. This diversity will form the underpinnings for public worship, celebrating the global Anabaptist church.

Plans will be refined when MWC staff and southern California hosts meet in Pasadena, May 2 and 3.

A consultation on the theme of service, examining how the New Testament deacon role can be adapted to serve the marginalized within the global Anabaptist family in the 21st century, will precede the council meetings.

Pakisa Tshimika, MWC associate secretary, and Ronald J. Mathies, current Mennonite Central Committee executive director, are planning the consultation.

At the officers meeting in January, Paul Quiring, MWC treasurer, reported a small year-end deficit, largely due to the lower value of the American dollar. The deficit will be covered from reserve funds, not by cutting program or staff. However, a 2005 budget, which was approved, has been crafted based on a weakened dollar.

Larry Miller, MWC executive secretary, reported on proposals that are being developed on how the notion of a world communion can redefine terms of MWC participation beyond national conferences.

New categories such as "churches in association with MWC" and "friends of MWC" could create space within MWC for some congregations and other bodies. Miller will bring his proposals to the executive committee in August.

Miller also reported that a joint study commission appointed by the Lutheran World Federation and MWC will hold its first meeting in Strasbourg, France, June 27 to July 1.

The initial focus of the study will be the condemnations of Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession of Faith, still the primary confession being used by Lutherans worldwide.—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference News Service*

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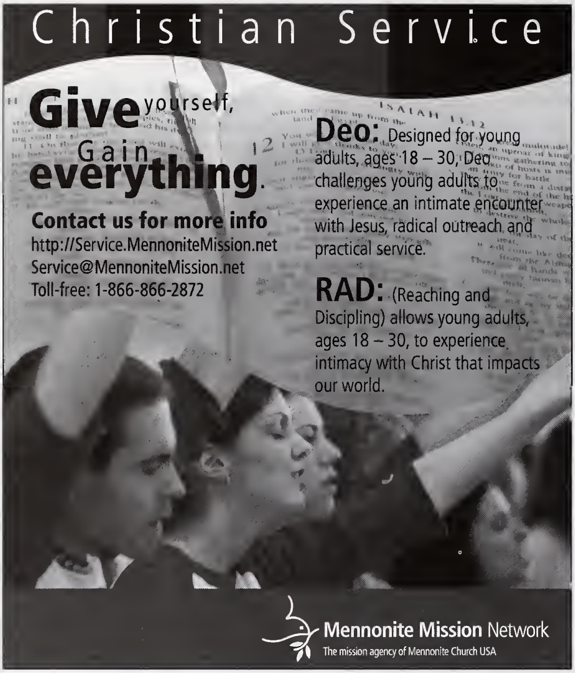
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The Coordinator of Member Services will work directly with MEDA's constituency to assist in the delivery of quality services to MEDA members which includes: planning annual convention and regional meetings; supporting and connecting geographic MEDA chapters, and managing chapter and member information. In addition, this position will develop strategies to expand MEDA's reach and provide new and innovative services for members. This position is based in Lancaster, PA and some travel will be involved. Start date: April 2005.

Qualifications include:

- Undergraduate university degree in business, social sciences or related field.
- In-depth knowledge of MEDA's constituency (Anabaptist/Christians in business/professions).
- Work experience in a membership or similar organization/business.
- Demonstrated success in event and meeting planning.
- Strong interpersonal, written communication, and computer skills.
- Appreciation and support of MEDA's faith, values and goals.

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MEDA

Tsunami trauma

MCC starts counseling partnership.

Recovering from the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami is about more than replacing buildings or clearing debris. Residents in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, also must heal from the trauma of their losses.

In the disaster's wake, three Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partners in central Java joined forces for the first time to form the Forum for Humanity and Peoplehood to work at trauma counseling.

One of its first actions was to invite MCC consultants Evelyn and Karl Bartsch, State College, Pa., to Indonesia for a month to work with them in training a group of some 30 individuals—nurses, teachers, counselors, relief workers, students and others—in trauma counseling techniques.

Before the Bartsches arrived on Jan. 23, the organization had translated major portions of the couple's trauma counseling workbook into Indonesian and had arranged for them to meet with an imam, an Islamic leader, to add culturally appropriate exercises and reflections.

After a week-long seminar in Java, some of the new trainees headed to Banda Aceh, one of several cities and towns on Sumatra island that bore the brunt of the tsunami catastrophe.

Sitting on new floor mats in the airy dining hall of a Banda Aceh nursing school that had been scrubbed free of traces of tsunami muck, the trainees worked with a group of Acehnese to teach them the tools of trauma counseling. MCC funded the hall's cleanup, which created a tranquil oasis on an otherwise muddy, tsunami-disheveled campus.

On the final day of training, the local group put their skills to the test. One of the participants, a university lecturer, had arranged to have his surviving students—45 out of 100—come for a trauma-incident debriefing. The participants seemed pleased to have the opportunity to share what they had gotten from the workshop with the 36 young adults.

"By helping others we heal ourselves," one participant said later.

Both groups of trainees—the first in Salatiga on Java island and the second on Sumatra island—enthusiastically embraced the teachings.

Some of the Banda Aceh trainees decided to form an ongoing local organization dedicated to trauma healing.

This energetic response may be because, as a World Bank report states, "No family in the region is untouched by the disaster. Hundreds of communities have been washed away. The people of Aceh and North Sumatra have been severely traumatized by the scale of the tragedy."—*Emily Will of Mennonite Central Committee News Service*

CALENDAR

Mennonite Heritage Chorale, annual program, Sun., April 10. First program at 9:15 a.m., East Chestnut Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa. Second program 2 p.m. at the Midway Mennonite Reception Center, East Lexington Road, Lititz, Pa. Evening program 7 p.m. at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa. A freewill offering will be accepted. For more information, call 717-627-0812.

WORKERS

Miller, Howard, was installed Jan. 23 as lead pastor at Waynesboro (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Peachey, Bryon, was licensed Jan. 26 as campus pastor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Alderfer, Eli Charles, Feb. 1, to Chris and Jana Hostetter Alderfer, Harleysville, Pa.

Brockmueller, Alexa Ortman, Feb. 12, to Bradley and Charisse Ortman Brockmueller, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Dorado, Neva Soledad, Dec. 1, 2004, to Gustavo and Penny Frey Dorado, Newton, Kan.

Kanagy, Ethan Lynn, Feb. 23, to Robert and Audrey Zimmerman Kanagy, Lancaster, Pa.

Keeslar, Conner Jay, Feb. 14, to Corey and Pamela Pagels Keeslar, Lagrange, Ind.

Knepp, Gracie Ann, Jan. 14, to Emery and Marsha Graber Knepp, Sarasota, Fla.

Krabill, Annika Erin Chupp, Jan. 13, to Ron Krabill and Nancy Chupp, Seattle.

Lantz, Andrew Sean, Feb. 8, to Doug and Gwen Stoltzfus Lantz, Harrisonburg, Va.

Martin, Eli Cole Underwood, Feb. 9, to Andrew and Lydia Underwood Martin, Goshen, Ind.

Oyer, Maya Elise, Jan. 17, to Mark and Laura Beechy Oyer, Goshen, Ind.

Rempel, Jace Isaiah, Feb. 15, to Randy and Kristen Litwiller Rempel, Iowa City, Iowa.

Romero, Andrea Camila, Feb. 8, to Jorge and Blanca Romero, Reedley, Calif.

Rusel, Avery, Jan. 18, to Colin and Lora Gisel Rusel, Cassopolis, Mich.

Stutzman, Jeremy Michael, Jan. 24, to Shawn and Monica Reinford Stutzman, Lebanon, Ore.

Thomas, Isaac James and Grace Marie (twins), Jan. 1, to Matthew and Kristen S. Beiler Thomas, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Kafley/Parajuli: Prashant Kafley, Nepal, and Luna Parajuli, Nepal, Jan. 15 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

DEATHS

Behmer, Charles E., 84, Lancaster, Pa., died Feb. 7. Spouse: Catherine Behmer (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Elizabeth Swinehart Behmer. Children: Cathleen Stoltzfus, Daniel, Stephen; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 11 at Charles Snyder Funeral Home, Millersville, Pa.

Beyeler, Edna Zimmerly, 101, Smithville, Ohio, died Feb. 7. Spouse: Lester Beyeler (deceased). Parents: John and Sarah Steiner Zimmerly. Children: Esther Gray, Elizabeth Jacobs, Glenard, Lowell, Milton, Robert, Eunice Brenneman, Eloise Hostetler, Ivan, Lester, Marion, Elaine Hershberger; 29 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Butts, Merle, 77, Reedley, Calif., died Dec. 31, 2004. Spouse: Madie Neufeld Butts. Children: Donna Friedenberg; Christie Brady, Jeff Burch-Butts; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

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Claassen, Anna Rebecca, 79, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 11. Parents: Herman and Lydia Goertz Claassen. Funeral: Feb. 14 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Crilow, Maxine, 79, Millersburg, Ohio, died Feb. 9. Spouse: Earl Crilow (deceased). Parents: Albert and Elizabeth Mast. Children: Richard, Roger, Rita Hummell, Bob, Lynn; 14 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 13 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Dick, Arlene Peters, 87, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Feb. 11. Spouse: Jacob A. Dick. Parents: Cornelius and Katherine Rempel Peters. Children: Mary Harder, Norman, Marlin Erin; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Doerksen, Marie Winkler, 86, Reedley, Calif., died Jan. 24. Spouse: (1st) Adolph Quenzer (deceased), (2nd) John Doerksen. Parents: Albert and Mary Winkler. Children: Kathy Bauman, Randy Quenzer, Duane Quenzer, Ron, Calvin; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Eisenbeis, Esther Graber, 93, Freeman, S.D., died Feb. 14. Spouse: Jacob Eisenbeis (deceased). Parents: Jacob ad Carolina Graber. Children: Larry, Lola Lohrentz; six grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Ewert, William, 87, Millersburg, Ohio, died Feb. 5. Spouse: Erma Schnell Ewert. Parents: David and Agatha Baerg Ewert. Child: Verlon. Funeral: Feb. 9 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

Franz, Robert A., 90, Spokane, Wash., died Jan. 27. Spouse: Minnie Lund Franz. Parents: Leonard L. and Juliana Ewert Franz. Children: Jay, Delwin, Roberta Hodgson, Carma; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wash.

Gascho, Elva F. Newswanger, 92, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 6. Spouse: Harry Gascho (deceased). Parents: Reuben W. and Mary Ressler Newswanger. Children: Mary B. Coffey; Luke, Timothy; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Goossen, Dorthy Claassen, 85, Beatrice, Neb., died Feb. 9. Spouse: Theodor Goossen (deceased). Parents: Henry P. and Elizabeth Thimm Claassen. Children: Ronald D., Darlene Dieckhoff; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Guengerich, Elmer Jacob, 83, Glendale, Ariz., died Jan. 20. Parents: Dr. Aaron and Emma Schrock Guengerich. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Chapel of the Chimes, Glendale.

Hagen, Gertrude Yoder, 82, Three Rivers, Mich., died Feb. 18. Spouse: William Hagen (deceased). Parents: Elmer and Susan Kauffman Yoder. Children: Joyce Martin, Delilah Barkdull; five grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 22 at Moorepark Community Church, Three Rivers.

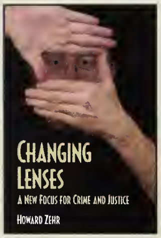
Jahnke, Margaret Edith, 79, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 17. Parents: Gottlieb and Annie Peters Jahnke. Memorial service: Feb. 26 at Hively Ave. Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Janzen, Robert W. "Bob", 66, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 13 of leukemia. Spouse: Judy Regier Janzen. Parents: R.O. and Matilda Janzen. Children: Jeffrey, Michael; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 16 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Lehman, Gilbert N., 95, Ephrata, Pa., died Jan. 15. Spouse: Lydia Y. Lehman. Funeral: Jan. 25 at Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Mack, Ellis, 94, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 11. Spouse: (1st) Edna Good Mack (deceased), (2nd) Gertrude Alderfer Mack (deceased). Parents: John and Emma Landis Mack. Children: Esther Delp, E. Jean Landis, Mary Loux, Edna Yoder, Hannah Lapp; stepchildren Drollene Gehman, Anna Mae Derstine, Lawrence; 16 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Spring Releases from Herald Press



Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice

In the Afterword to *Changing Lenses*, **Howard Zehr** described restorative justice as "an indistinct destination on a necessarily long and circuitous journey." Now, several decades later, he confidently says that, "although it is still a journey with many curves, many detours and wrong turns, the road and its destination is not as indistinct as it once was." Zehr believes that if we embark on this journey with respect and humility, with an attitude of wonder, it can lead us toward the kind of world we want our children and grandchildren to inhabit.

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Mott, Mary Elizabeth, 86, Hartville, Ohio, died Feb. 2. Spouse: (1st) Wayne Palmer (deceased), (2nd) John Mott (deceased). Parents: Dan J.F. and Mary Miller. Child: Joe. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Ober, Paul J., 67, Manheim, Pa., died Jan. 16. Spouse: Debra Haldeman Ober. Parents: Elmer and Minnie Johnson Ober. Children: Cheryl A. Beachler, Adam J., Eric S.; two grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 24 at Cedar Hill Community Church, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Peters, Homer B., 86, Lebanon, Ore., died Jan. 6. Spouse: Dolores Peters (deceased). Children: Joseph, Rebecca, Joanne, Ruth, Elizabeth; 13 grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Lebanon Mennonite Church.

Ruth, Sallie A., 89, Sellersville, Pa., died Jan. 30 of natural causes. Spouse: Winfield M. Ruth (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Martha Alderfer Clement. Children: Janet R. Clemmer, Dwight A.; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Schmidt, Tillie Nachtigal, 91, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Olin J. Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Henry P. and Maria Ediger Nachtigal. Children: Joyce Mills, Mary, Wayne; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Shetler, Katie Kipfer, 96, Pigeon, Mich., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Omar Shetler (deceased). Parents: Johna dn Rachel Oesch Kipfer. Children: Lois J. Massanari, Lyle D.; five grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon.

Sommers, Oren, 97, Millersburg, Ohio, died Feb. 11. Spouse: Freda Beechy Sommers (deceased). Parents: Dan P. and Dinah Moser Sommers. Children: Ruth Miller, Merle, Carol, Myron; seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 15 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Stoltzfus, John F., 82, Gordonville, Pa., died Jan. 30 of acute myocardial infarction. Spouse: Betty Stoltzfus (deceased). Parents: Aaron and Fannie Fisher Stoltzfus. Children: Randall, Rodger, Ray, William, Robert, Richard, Rose Sharp, Ruth Smucker; 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Yoder, Elva, 107, Topeka, Ind., died Feb. 8. Spouse: Nellie Ruth Hostetler Yoder (deceased). Parents: Daniel V. and Fannie Yoder. Children: Dwight, Maurice, Gary, James, Joan Hughes; 20 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Topeka Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Sanford A., 92, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 25. Spouse: Shirley Cooper Yoder. Parents: A.I. and Saloma Yoder. Children: Ronald, Dale, Charles, Sandra, Lois, Joellen; 19 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 28 at Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Zook, Herbert, 91, New Wilmington, Pa., died Jan. 14. Spouse: (1st) Mary Kathryn Bott (deceased), (2nd) Flora Turner. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, New Wilmington.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our online forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Bluffton University seeks applications for the position of ***assistant campus pastor/spiritual life coordinator***. This person will work closely with the campus pastor to attend to the spiritual needs and care of the campus-wide community and work closely with various student religious life groups. Other duties will involve assisting with planning for a variety of workshop settings, working with the church relations department in the coordination of off-campus ministry groups and assist in a variety of programs related to the Pathways initiative (i.e. women in ministry, sophomore retreat). Applicants should have a committed faith in Jesus Christ and a love for college-age young adults. A Master of Divinity degree is preferred along with related ministry experience and an appreciation for the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church expression of the Christian faith. Send letter of application, résumé and three references to Don Schweingruber, Vice President and Dean of Student Life, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive., Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. Applications should be received by March 31. Bluffton University reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

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Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) seeks an ***executive minister*** to begin serving October 2005. As the chief executive officer, the executive minister will be responsible for implementing the mission and vision of MCEC. Appointed by and reporting to the executive council, the executive minister will carry the primary responsibility to lead the team, to oversee the supportive ministries with the congregations, to supervise the staff and to maintain relationships with the broader Mennonite Church and its organizations.

Important qualifications include a strong personal faith rooted in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition, a love for the church, theological training and pastoral or church leadership experience. Strong leadership and communication skills, organizational and administrative strength and personal flexibility are essential.

The position is based in Kitchener, Ont. Job descriptions are available from the moderator. Please submit inquiries or applications by April 1 to Darrell Fast, MCEC Moderator, 36 Malibu Drive, Leamington, ON N8H 5G5; phone 519-322-5927.

Service Adventure ***leadership positions*** are available for singles, couples or families in Alaska, Oregon, New Mexico, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and North Carolina. To find out more visit our Web site: http://service.mennonitemission.net or contact us toll free 866-866-2872 or email Service@MennoniteMission.net.

Gift and Thrift Inc. in Harrisonburg, Va., seeks two full-time positions: one as ***manager for A World of Good thrift shop*** and one as ***manager for Artisans' Hope***, a partnership store of Ten Thousand Villages. Experience in retail business and management is desirable. Responsibilities include demonstrating Christian principles, training and supervising volunteers, marketing and promoting the mission of MCC. Both positions carry full-time salary/benefits including health coverage and retirement plan. For more information or to receive an application form, call Glendon Blosser at 540-434-0657 or email GBlosser@aol.com.

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Full-time pastor/church planter position in central North Carolina available in July 2005. Responsibilities include half-time pastoral leadership to the **Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship,** a small congregation located near University of North Carolina Greensboro campus. Remaining half-time responsibilities divided between assisting church-planting efforts in nearby Graham and Winston-Salem. Interested candidates should contact John Bender at 2009 Gramercy Park Drive, Greensboro, NC 27406; 336-697-7824; benderfive@aol.com.

Amigo Centre Board of Directors of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference is searching for a person to serve as ***executive director*** for the centre. This important ministry includes the following functions: serving as chief executive officer, providing primary staff leadership for the overall operations of Amigo Centre, working with the Amigo Centre Board of Directors in clarifying vision and direction of the centre's ministries, working collaboratively with IN-MI Conference leadership in providing retreat and camping opportunities for the congregations of the conference and surrounding area.

He or she will possess a vibrant Christian faith with a Mennonite-Anabaptist perspective. He or she will have some theological education and/or professional training with at least six years of related ministry experience is preferred. The appointee will be available ideally by June 2005.

We encourage women, men and people from under-represented groups to apply.

Interested people may submit a résumé with references to: Amigo Centre Search Committee, c/o Jim Gascho, 212 S Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. For more information call Jim Gascho at 574-533-5396 ext. 102, or email Jgascho@SharingServices.com or visit Amigo Centre's Web site at www.amigocentre.org.

Camp Deerpark is seeking to fill the position of ***maintenance director***. This person is responsible for building and grounds maintenance, new construction and supervision of maintenance and housekeeping staff. Salaried position with benefits, including housing and insurance. Camp Deerpark is owned and operated by the New York City Mennonite churches and offers people of all ages, races and backgrounds the opportunity to enjoy Christian camping at an affordable price. For more information please contact Ken Bontrager at 845-754-8669 or admin@campdeerpark.org

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for ***Spanish instructor*** to teach upper-level classes, including AP Spanish, for the 2005-06 school year. Send résumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446, fax 215-362-2943, email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., positions beginning August 2005.

Western seeks a passionate, dynamic ***music director*** to lead its award-winning choir program. Director will oversee five choirs and two bands, involving 80 percent of the student body. Applicants should have a bachelor's degree in music education or vocal performance. Teaching license and experience desired.

Contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or email him at djwhite@westernmennoniteschool.org

Western seeks female candidates interested in youth ministry to serve as ***resident assistant*** for its high school resident program. Responsibilities include mentoring students, planning and supervising activities mainly during the weekday program. This is a volunteer position with benefits.

Closing: March 31. Contact Sherri-Lynn Wenger at 866-343-9378 or sherriwenger@hotmail.com.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students from several states/provinces and from around the world. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. We are seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ.

Management opportunity—Multilocation restaurant and retailing business seeking a ***general manager*** for central Ohio location. This challenging position involves managing a large staff and requires leadership experience with the ability to provide a progressive vision for the future. Send résumé to P.O. Box 68, Walnut Creek, OH 44687.

South Hutchinson Mennonite Church is expanding its pastoral team to meet the needs of a growing congregation. We are seeking a person gifted, trained and/or experienced in ***children's ministries*** to provide leadership, vision and program development for children birth through grade 5 for a full-time position. People interested should request an application from Search Committee, SHMC, 808 S. Poplar, South Hutchinson, KS 67505, or shmcoffice@shmc-online.net.

Is God calling you to use your leadership abilities, management skills and two or more years of cross-cultural experience to serve others through **MCC**? This year MCC needs people to lead MCC work in Congo, Bangladesh and a director for its Visitor Exchange Program (based in Akron, Pa.). In 2006, MCC will need leaders for MCC work in Jamaica, Bolivia, Haiti, Tanzania, Nigeria, Mexico and a West Coast MCC director (based in Reedley, Calif.). Plan ahead. Application review begins immediately for 2005 positions. Application review for 2006 positions begins August 2005. Contact Charmayne Brubaker, Human Resources, 717-859-1151, cdb@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for job descriptions and more information about these upcoming MCC leadership openings.

Franconia Mennonite Church, located in Franconia, Pa., is seeking a talented, energetic individual to fill the position of ***music director*** and lead a congregation of over 700 members in our music ministry. This very important role will give leadership to all music areas within the church, including adult and children's choirs, music planning for worship services and congregational singing. For more information or to request a detailed job description, please call Keith Berger at 215-723-3220. Résumés can be sent to kberger@franconiamennonite.org.

Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email TheMennonite@TheMennonite.org.

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A bestseller on faith and politics

Gordon Houser

During last fall's election campaign, *Sojourners* and others placed an ad in major U.S. newspapers that said, "God is not a Republican or a Democrat." While that seemed an obvious truism, it spoke to the vicious partisan politics that has invaded the church.

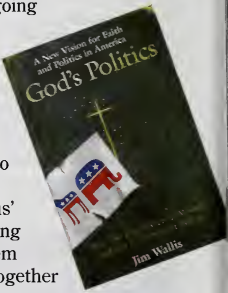
Now Jim Wallis, who helped write that ad and is editor of *Sojourners*, has a new book out that, lo and behold, sits at #5 on the *New York Times* Bestseller List (as of the end of February). *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005, $24.95) seeks to create a new political conversation that bridges the polarities of liberal and conservative, left and right, religious and secular.

It's a tall order, but given the popular response to the book and to Wallis, who is on a speaking tour and appeared on Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*, people are interested in being both religious and involved in solving some of our major politcal problems. The two subjects regarded as impolite to talk about are now on many people's minds.

On Feb. 18, Wallis spoke at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., to a capacity crowd, part of a Peace Lecture series, and to Mennonite students participating in the annual intercollegiate peace fellowship. He challenged Mennonites to not just be "peace lovers" but "peacemakers."

Most of what he said—no surprise—can be found in his book. He spoke as a pragmatist. Politics is about tackling serious problems and getting things done. Bickering over ideals get us nowhere.

This is a critique Mennonites and others need to hear, but I wonder how pragmatic Jesus' going to his death on the cross was. Pacifism as an ideal has its shortcomings and easily gets separated from people's real needs. But it is a helpful discipline that can keep us from going after short-term good that often leads to long-term harm. Patience is a needed virtue, while desperation about the many needs around us can lead us to think their solution is all up to us.



The best thing about Wallis' book is his stories. These bring his points alive and make them accessible. They also bring together people from his conservative evangelical upbringing and various peace and justice leaders he has known.

The book is partly a pastiche of editorials, "open letters," essays and sermons Wallis has written, and it suffers some from repetition. It also makes combining politics and religion to solve the world's problems sound easy.

As any popular book on politics must, this one has many pithy sayings that, while true and helpful, need nuance: "God is personal but never private." "Saying no to violence is good, but having an alternative is better." "Prophecy is not future telling but articulating moral truth." "The problem is that politics is still run by ideological polarities that leave many people feeling left out."

The most convincing section of the book is the one on poverty, and here is perhaps the best opportunity for the so-called left and right to work together. He makes a strong case for the biblical weight behind concern for the poor.

God's Politics is an important book and worth reading and discussing. It calls us to work together on important issues, seeking the common good rather than feeding our egos. It's also good to remember Wallis' warning that "there are no easy religious answers to hard political questions." TM

FILMS

Hotel Rwanda (PG-13) tells the true story of Paul Rusesabagina (Don Cheadle), who saved the lives of 1,200 of his fellow Rwandans during the brutal Hutu slaughter of Tutsis in 1994. He was manager at a luxury hotel run by a Belgian company in Rwanda's capital city of Kigala. His courageous, astute diplomacy skirts death in numerous suspense-laden scenes. Cheadle's performance is oustanding. Without showing much of the actual violence that left about 1 million corpses, the film places you in the midst of the horrific genocide that Western nations chose to ignore. The film's message does not need the few scenes pointing out the evil effects of colonialism.

VIDEOS/DVDS

Friday Night Lights (PG-13) shows the idolatry of high school football in the medium-sized Texas town of Odessa. Covering the high school's 1988 season, though changing a few factual details, the film seeks a balance between showing the ill effects of placing all one's hopes in a sport and the qualities of being a team and sacrificing together for a goal. The DVD includes interesting interviews with the key players—but not the coach.

BOOKS

Since the Bible is "the essential book of the church" (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective), we need help in learning more from Scripture. Three new helpful books are **The Bible: A History** by Stephen M. Miller and Robert V. Huber (Good Books, 2004, $29.95), **God's Shalom Project: An Engaging Look at the Bible's Sweeping Story** by Bernhard Ott (Good Books, 2004, $7.95) and **Opening the Bible: Essays by Howard H. Charles**, edited by J. Robert Charles (Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2005, $18). *The Bible: A History* is a beautiful, large-format book that covers how the Old and New Testaments came to be and the Bible's use and influence through church history and today. Each spread has illustrations and sidebars and includes much fascinating information. Ott's overview of the Bible under the rubric of "shalom" is especially useful for newer Bible readers. It is the 2004 selection for Mennonite World Conference's Global Shelf of Literature. *Opening the Bible* collects 50 essays Charles wrote for *Builder* as lesson helps for Sunday school teachers. His son edited them after his father's death in 2002. It's a good resource from a noted Bible teacher.

It used to be let nothing
go to waste
now it's let nothing
go to waist

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Everett J. Thomas

Easter seed

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified … unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."—John 12:23-24

Holy Week and Easter are almost always about Jesus' experiences during his last days in Jerusalem. But what did the events of that week look like from God's perspective? Jesus' words to his disciples suggest an answer: God was planting his son as a seed in the earth.

Last year's movie *The Passion of the Christ* reminded viewers of the horrible pain—both physical and emotional—Jesus endured on Good Friday. However, it did little to portray God's reality that day. Our rituals during Holy Week regularly focus on Jesus' Palm Sunday entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Jesus' crucifixion and the empty tomb on Sunday morning. Little is said about God.

But Jesus, alerting his disciples that he must soon be killed, described himself as a grain of wheat falling into the earth to explain why he had to die. For his disciples—who carried the secret that Jesus was God's Son—this metaphor about a grain of wheat falling into the ground to die would have had an additional layer of meaning. For them, the Jahweh God they worshiped would plant a seed in this earth to change the world forever.

The Genesis 22 story of Isaac's near-sacrifice foreshadowed the action God took on Good Friday. Abraham and Sarah, who prayed for years for children, could live in posterity only through their only-begotten son Isaac. But not long after they had this son, God asked Abraham to sacrifice their only child—their all—to God. Abraham's willingness to trust God so completely that he would give Isaac back to God has been the benchmark of faithfulness through the ages.

God died for us so that new life can grow anew in us and we can rise from the death of our sin.

In the Ancient Near Eastern world, children were "seeds," and new generations were the fruit. Having children meant immortality because one's name would continue to live. In a world with a high mortality rate, the more children one had the better chance that one's name—and therefore essence—would live for generations into the future.

While a person's strength was measured by the number of children left behind, to be childless was to disappear from history. This Ancient Near Eastern world would have understood that if Isaac was sacrificed, Abraham and Sarah would forfeit their very existence.

Such understandings of posterity and children were the context of the stories and metaphors Jesus used in his public ministry. In the New Testament world, Jahweh sacrificing his only-begotten son would have been understood as God sacrificing his strength … and very existence … for us. In other words, God died for us.

That is the Holy Week message: God, the Creator of the universe, loved the world and all creation so much that he gave his only-begotten Son.

In doing so, God changed the world forever. The change is God's posterity—the fruit of this sacrifice—and that posterity is us. All who believe today, all who have believed in the past and all who will believe in the future are God's children.

The Holy Week miracle continues. Each year when we commemorate the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying, we are regenerated by this sacred story. So we offer ourselves—each of us in the small universe we stubbornly inhabit with ourselves at the center—as the soil into which God again plants the seed. Again this year we remember that God died for us so that new life can grow anew, and we can rise from the death of our sin.

In her prayer book *The Divine Hours: Prayers for Springtime,* Phyllis Tickle sets the prayer for Easter week. Adapted for us all to pray together, the words testify to the fruit of the Easter seed:

"Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit: through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."—*ejt*

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated April 5.

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The Mennonite

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GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

making peace with evangelism

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A congregation of sea lions

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

Following the earthquake of 1989, between 10 and 50 sea lions decided they wanted to congregate on Pier 39 in San Francisco Bay. The floating docks of the marina provided the best place to sun and sleep. And an abundance of herring in the area didn't hurt. Good eating and good fellowship always sounds like a winner. Today this congregation of sea lions numbers around 300 but may grow to as many as 600 in the winter. They have been given a permanent home on Pier 39.

Over the years I have watched these animals sun themselves, and I've decided they may be an apt prototype for a Mennonite congregation. In the style of Robert Fulgrum, I could say that everything I learned about congregations I learned from the sea lions. This is what I mean.

1. Sea lions prefer to live in groups. They feel safer and are more comfortable in a group than alone. Congregational singing is our joint expression of this reality.

2. Inevitably one sea lion prefers to go off and find his own spot to sleep in peace away from the others. However, he will still want to be in close proximity to the group and considered part of it. And the congregation of sea lions let him do exactly that. Tolerance of differences is a gift in congregational life.

3. In a group of 100 animals, three sea lions will perpetually fight while the rest of the congregation survives by just ignoring them. The congregation that has not learned this will burn themselves out trying to put out fires.

4. The three sea lions who fight constantly seem to be able to go on indefinitely without looking for alternative solutions to their conflict. For example, if there is room for only two lions to lie down comfortably on the edge of a dock but three lions try to inhabit that limited space, one of the three will be pushed off into the water, followed by much barking and bellowing. This scene is repeated over and over, even though there is room on other, nearby docks to accommodate the other sea lion. Somehow the three prefer to fight and bark instead of exploring new possibilities. You can readily apply this behavior to your congregation.

5. Certain members of the congregation seem larger than the others and need to stand up in the assembly from time to time and roar. Then they can lie down again and be quiet. The unspoken leaders of every congregation need time to speak. If they are given the opportunity to be heard, then they will usually submit to the decision of the entire group. But not all the time.

6. In the assembly of the sleeping, only the babies are allowed to sleep on top of another sea lion without getting in trouble. If an adult happens to flop on top of another adult, they are reminded quickly of their trespass. Children are given concessions that are afforded to few others as long as they are quiet.

7. Everyone barks at each other from time to time. Conflict is normal in congregational life as well.

8. Some whole groups of sea lions learn to lie quietly all smashed together without fighting. My hat is off to them and to congregations who have learned to do the same.

9. Territorial fighting is unnecessary because there are quite a few empty docks nearby with no sea lions on them at all.

10. Groups of any kind of creature are just plain noisy, even relatively quiet congregations.

We may think Mennonite congregations are one of God's unique creations, but we are only a part of God's broader reality. And like the sea lions, we are challenged to learn to live together for the good of the whole. It is not easy but is essential to God's world. May God say of us someday, "How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). TM

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Health-care access

I read with interest the numerous articles in the March 1 issue on health-care access, especially "Barriers to Access to Long-term Care" by Ada Hallman. While employed as a nurse in one of the Mennonite retirement communities in our area, I was amazed at the number of non-Mennonites who lived in the retirement community. I often was present at admissions meetings and was discouraged at the number of Mennonites who were told there were no beds available (when in fact there were) after the financial part of the application was revealed. This became apparent to me when my own aunt could not get a bed in our nursing facility because she did not have two years of financial funds for private pay—should she be there that long. It didn't matter that my aunt and uncle gave generously to the church and to mission work throughout their lives instead of saving a huge sum of money for their own long-term care. It is a shame that Mennonites cannot take care of their own people.*—Rose Allebach, Souderton, Pa.*

I appreciated the March 1 issue on health care. I have always maintained that the United States has a health-*cost* crisis, not a health-*care* crisis. Having been on both sides of the bed in my 60 plus years, I have found health care to be good, whether insured or uninsured. I have been both and cared for both. But, I did notice that the insured—especially Medicare patients—will have more extensive tests ordered that don't seem necessary: Doctors seem to be more generous in ordering tests or prescribing medicine or getting second opinions and ordering consultations.

I agree with Howard Brenneman's statement that all of us have created the current health-care problems ("Barriers to Access to Long-term Care"). It is a dam that broke, and fixing it is nearly impossible. I can't fix it, but I can control my health-care cost. I am glad to be part of a denomination that is trying to fix the dam. Keep up the good work. *—Doris Martin, Gettysburg, Pa.*

Rising health-insurance premiums have cost employees and employers far more than taxes over the past number of years. I welcome a more in-depth analysis of the causes for skyrocketing health premiums. I know that improved technology and new medications add to the increased costs, but how much does the plethora of HMOs, insurance companies, over-the-top profits for the pharmaceutical industry, duplication of medical facilities and drugs add to increased costs? What are some of the creative options for providing coverage for the increasing numbers being denied access to coverage? In addition, it would be helpful to have a critique of the options that have been put forward over the past 10 years but rejected by Congress. Why is the word "single-payer" such a dirty word? What are the pros and cons of having a universal health-care system? Is there a hybrid approach that is better? For example, could one have universal coverage (single-payer: government) for basic health-care needs but private insurance if you want high-end coverage for such things as open-heart surgery? Are the challenges we face in access and cost best resolved with public policy changes or do we think private enterprise can best solve them? *—Norm Kauffmann, Goshen, Ind.*

Associate groups racist?

In his editorial "A Decade on Damascus Road" (Feb. 15), Everett J. Thomas describes so well the complexity of the efforts necessary to "help our denomination move toward multicultural and antiracist identity" and how we measure progress made toward that goal. Much of the complexity grows from the wide diversity of cultures in our nationwide denomination.

But after Thomas' description of all this, he turns his case on its head by citing as continuing evidence of racist attitudes the decline of interest and support of several organizations. Iglesia Menonita Hispana evidently felt it was being slighted so "requested an investigation relating to racism in the Mennonite Church." Mennonite Education Agency reported declining financial support for Racial Ethnic Leadership Education.

Is it racism that interest and support decline for these blatantly race-targeted and named groups, or is it racist to continue them even after the massive

IN THIS ISSUE

Evangelism and Church Planting Sunday falls each year on the first Sunday after Easter. So we focus this issue on outreach and evangelism efforts. "Making Peace With Evangelism" (page 8) is Amy Spencer's soul-searching story about sharing her faith "in a world teetering between black-and-white and mish-mash." She suggests that when it comes to sharing our faith, "we're afraid of what the Spirit will do to us if we say yes." Karen F. Nofziger offers a more specific challenge (page 12): After visiting 10 congregations, she reports on her experiences with church greeters, ushers, introductions and follow-up. She also says, "More of us should visit congregations so we know what it feels like to be a visitor." The third woman to focus on evangelism and outreach recounts what it was like to be at the receiving end (page 14). Jennifer Szambecki, now working for Mennonite Mission Network, describes her unchurched childhood spent often in blues bars with her parents. She also describes how new generations of unchurched young people may become part of Mennonite Church USA.*—Editors* reorganization and transformation that became Mennonite Church USA?—*David Brunk, Collegeville, Pa.*

Shank not Shenk

In "The Most Creative Event in Mennonite History" (March 15) my name is spelled wrong: David A. Shenk, instead of David A. Shank. The article wrongly justified doing so by referring to Al Keim's book on Harold S. Bender, where a photo of that "Amsterdam Group" of 1952 erroneously lists me as David Shenk. This has often confused me with David W. Shenk, former Eastern Mennonite Missions missionary to East Africa, writer on Islam and currently a teacher at Lithuania Christian College. This note corrects both *The Mennonite* and Keim. It was David A. Shank, then in service with Mennonite Board of Missions in Belgium, later with Goshen College and "The Mennonite Hour" and a decade with African-initiated churches in West Africa, now of Goshen, Ind., who was involved in the publication of *Concern* and Anabaptist renewal.—*David A. Shank, Goshen, Ind.*

Liberal like the world?

Wayne Kratzer's prejudicial diatribe about "liberal colleges" (Readers Say, March 1) cannot go without being answered. Yale and Harvard, he says, "have practically no Bible" even though they were founded as schools to train pastors. Has Kratzer ever visited either place to look for "the Bible"?

I found the Old Testament at Yale and the New Testament at Harvard. I went to Yale in 1963 as a typical young adult, discounting the Old Testament in the sense that I thought it had little to teach me on the subject of the origins of the universe. But under the guidance of my Old Testament professors, I fell in love with the creation story in Genesis and have spent much of my subsequent ministry preaching series of sermons on "the creation faith" stories. In 1979, I spent a semester at Harvard, under the guidance of Helmut Koester and Krister Stendahl, researching and writing on each phrase of the Lord's Prayer and studying the book of Acts. I came away with a completely new vision of what early church history has to teach us about being disciples of Jesus in today's troubled world. If all of this means that I am a hopeless liberal, I am glad to claim that label.—*Melvin D. Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

Re "Liberal Like the World?" (Readers Say, March 1): let's examine that word "liberal." *Webster's New World Dictionary; Second College Edition* says, 1. originally suited to a free man; 2. giving freely; generous, 3. large, or plentiful; ample; abundant, 4. tolerant of views differing from one's own; broad minded; not orthodox, or conventional; 5. of democratic or republican forms of government, as distinguished from monarchies, aristocracies, etc., 6. favoring reform or progress as in religion, education, favoring political reforms tending toward democracy and personal freedom for the individual; progressive ..."

What would be the antithesis of liberal? Perhaps words such as stingy, narrow-minded, tight-fisted, miserly, scanty; of totalitarian forms of government distinguished by monarchies, dictatorships, oligarchies; unfavorable to reform, tending toward authoritarianism and strict rule for the individual; regressive all come to mind. Is that what we want? Is that what our Anabaptist forebears struggled for?

We who call ourselves Mennonites are the spiritual heirs of the liberals of the Reformation. Why? Because they insisted that the teachings of Jesus as codified in the Sermon on the Mount were the socioeconomic and political manifesto of the kingdom of God on earth—to be put into practice in the here and now, not reserved for some far-off, pie-in-the-sky, when-you-die, by-and-by age. That is the true embodiment of liberality: the demand for openhanded, generous, reform-minded, progressive, plentiful and abundant living for everyone. Liberal like the world? I hardly think so.

Being *truly* liberal is anything but like the world.—*Jim Krause, Lawrence, Kan.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

This month we focus on evangelism:

○ I consider myself evangelistic (35%)

○ I do not consider myself evangelistic (32%)

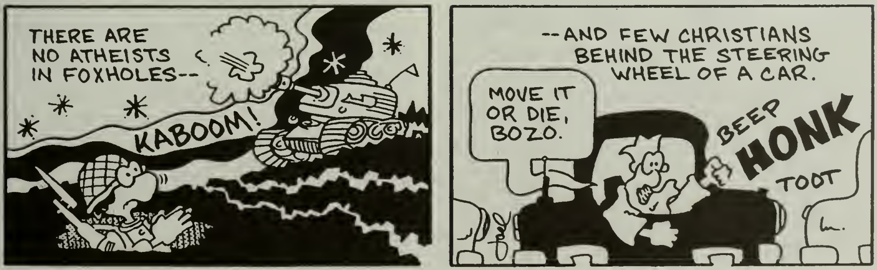
○ It depends on the situation (30%)

○ Not sure (3%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


THERE ARE NO ATHEISTS IN FOXHOLES--
KABOOM!
--AND FEW CHRISTIANS BEHIND THE STEERING WHEEL OF A CAR.
MOVE IT OR DIE, BOZO.
BEEP
HONK
TOOT

IN BRIEF

Kniss wins peace oratorical contest

Sharon E. Kniss, a third-year Eastern Mennonite University student from Harrisonburg, Va., has won the C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest held March 18 on the Harrisonburg campus. Kniss spoke on "Engaging the Terrorists: A Discourse on Living with the Other." She received a cash award. Runners-up were Elisa J. Wolf, a sophomore from Lititz, Pa., and Zachary T. Kurtz, a senior from Keyser, W.Va. Kniss asked what needs to happen to engage "the other" and used Christ's parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 to argue that "how we learn to live with each other forms the basis of peacebuilding in society."—*Eastern Mennonite University*

5,500 U.S. military personnel desert

The Pentagon estimates that more than 5,500 U.S. military personnel have deserted the ranks since the start of the Iraq war, according to Kathy Dobie in *Harper's* (March). Some have voiced opposition to the war, while others have untreated injuries or urgent family matters.—*The Christian Century*

The Mennonite, Inc., agrees to changes

CASSOPOLIS, Mich.—Meeting March 18-19 at Camp Friedenswald, the board of The Mennonite, Inc., agreed to move *The Mennonite*'s subscription fulfillment service to the Goshen, Ind., office in May. Those services have been contracted to Mennonite Publishing Network. Rebecca Helmuth will begin May 1 as customer service manager for *The Mennonite*. Editor Everett J. Thomas said he hopes to have the customer service department up and running in Goshen by June 1.

The board accepted an audit by Stauffer & Company that showed a net loss of assets of $1,055 for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31 and approved a budget for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2006, of $594,226 in expenses and $614,400 in revenues. The board also looked at proposed changes to Mennonite Church USA bylaws that say The Mennonite, Inc., will be responsible to the denomination's Executive Board.—*Gordon Houser*

Youth explore 'The Scandal of Grace'

WINNIPEG—Almost 200 youth from across Canada and the United States took part March 11-13 in Canadian Mennonite University's annual Peace it Together event, a peace conference for senior high youth and young adults. Another 100 CMU students and alumni also participated.

This year's theme, "The Scandal of Grace—Loving Across Boundaries," explored how people can "make the Jesus revolution irresistible by becoming extremists for grace," according to speaker Shane Claiborne, a founding partner of the radical faith community The Simple Way in North Philadelphia. He spent three sessions exploring the topics "Most Distressing Disguises," "Collision of the Sword and the Cross" and the Sunday morning worship service on "Infectious Grace." Claiborne discussed how infectious grace is "about these small things that we do with great love every day."

He also suggested that as Christians we need to "become a home for those who have been completely marginalized." The metaphor of the mustard seed was used to show even the most overlooked seed can bear needed fruit. He also dispelled the idea that people can't be Christians because of their past. —*Tim Friesen*

DIFFEREN
OF ON ACE

Many cultures, one peace at international festival

Hesston (Kan.) College students (from left) Monica Yosin, Ivana Gunawan, Gabriela Widowati and Yuanita Santoso perform a traditional Indonesian dance March 10 during the 13th annual International Festival, which featured international desserts and a program of drama, traditional dance and music on the theme "One World, Different Cultures: Many People, One Peace." Hesston has 51 international students from 14 countries, the highest per capita enrollment of any Mennonite Church USA college.—*Hesston College*

Dottie Kauffmann

Nurses learn to connect nursing practice and faith

Michele Hershberger (left) plays the role of a cancer patient facing her illness, while Bonnie Sowers plays the role of her nurse during a drama at the Mennonite Nurses Association in Orlando, Fla., March 11. MNA hosted a luncheon during the Mennonite Health Assembly. Sowers and Hershberger, who both teach at Hesston (Kan.) College, led a session on "Integrating the Biblical Story with Nursing Practice and Personal Faith Commitments." MNA provides networking and support for Anabaptist nurses. See mna.mennonite.net.—*MNA*

Mennonites attend Ecumenical Advocacy Days

WASHINGTON—More than 30 Mennonites, including five Bluffton (Ohio) University students, joined 800 Christian clergy, ecumenical and lay leaders for the third annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice March 11-14.

They met with congressional representatives to assert that it is time for a new vision of U.S. policy that includes a much more complete understanding of moral values.

During the last presidential election, media attention focused on moral issues related to abortion and same-sex marriage. This gathering affirmed that moral values include building a just global community that nurtures peace, alleviates poverty and protects the integrity of God's creation. —*Rochele Beachy*

Mission worker in Taiwan dies at age 80

WINNIPEG—Johan Nicolaas van den Berg (Han), 80, longtime worker for the Commission on Overseas Mission (COM) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), died Feb. 21 in Olds, Alta.

Johan Nicolaas van den Berg

Born in the Netherlands in 1924, van den Berg escaped a Nazi concentration camp and hid in a false attic. During World War II his convictions as a conscientious objector and pacifist strengthened.

He worked with MCC in Amsterdam, then in Indonesia, India, Vietnam and Taiwan, where he met his wife, Martha Boschman. They served in Taiwan with COM until 1993.

Funeral services were held Feb. 24 at Bergthal Mennonite Church in Didsbury, Alta.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Mennonite credit union celebrates growth

LANCASTER, Pa.—Mennonite Financial, a credit union serving Mennonites and related Anabaptist groups in the United States, wrapped up its first 50 years of providing financial services with 12 months of the highest growth in its history.

Membership in Mennonite Financial grew 10 percent last year; 730 new members brings the total to 8,000. Largest member growth came among young people. More than 240 new members in 2004 were 18 years and younger, a growth rate of 30 percent—"something unheard of in the credit union industry these days," says president Larry D. Miller.

Mennonite Financial will celebrate its 50th anniversary at a special members' meeting on May 2 at Laurelville Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa., close to where it all began on May 3, 1955, when eight employees at Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale, Pa., decided to pool their resources and establish a credit union.—*Mennonite Financial*

Goshen addresses violence against women

GOSHEN, Ind.—More than 70 men and women gathered at Goshen College March 11-12 for a conference on "Transforming the Culture of Violence Against Women." Sponsored by Goshen's Plowshares Peace Studies Project, Oaklawn, Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, the conference brought together church leaders, students, social workers, educators, legal advocates and others to to learn strategies that help reduce incidents of abuse of women.—*Goshen College*

Palm Sunday group challenges checkpoint

BETHLEHEM—On Palm Sunday, March 20, more than 300 Palestinians and their international supporters, including Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), called for freedom of movement, religion and human dignity for Palestinians with a nonviolent procession behind a donkey from Bethlehem's Manger Square to the checkpoint to Jerusalem. Without special identification papers, most Palestinian residents of Bethlehem are not allowed to enter Jerusalem for any reason.

Palestinian Christians, their Muslim supporters and a coalition of organizations organized the march. CPT members Christy Bischoff and Art Arbour provided nonviolence training.

As demonstrators approached the checkpoint, internationals and Palestinians linked arms and formed rows with the intention of going through the checkpoint. Israeli soldiers prevented the marchers from passing and warned them that if they did not leave in 15 minutes they would use force. The demonstrators sat down and refused to leave while organizers read a statement. The standoff ended without incident. —*Jessica Villota*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

ristians march for peace on Palm Sunday

n a weekend that marked the second anniversary of the inva-
on of Iraq, about 150 people, mostly Christians, participated in
e third annual Palm Sunday Peace Parade in Pasadena, Calif.
e marchers paraded along the sidewalk from a low-income
eighborhood to an upscale mall. Participants held banners and
gns protesting the war in Iraq and waved palm branches. In
ont of the mall, they sang and prayed for peace. They also
gned a letter addressed to the Pasadena City Council, calling
that body to pass a resolution protesting the war in Iraq. A
etition addressed to the U.S. Congress and President Bush
lled for an end to the war. "Malls are like temples in our secular
ciety," said organizer Bert Newton, associate pastor at
sadena Mennonite Church, one of the sponsors of the event.
eople go there to pay homage to the gods of consumerism
d materialism; they bring their tithes and offerings there. We
ent to a temple, like Jesus did, to take a stand for peace and
stice." Meanwhile, members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church,
ainesville, Fla., marked the second anniversary of the war in
aq March 19 with a candlelight vigil and prayer service in mem-
y of all who have died in the ongoing conflict. They were
ined by people from Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Gainesville
iends Meeting and St. Augustine's Catholic Church.

IN BRIEF

Bethel Young Alumnus Award to Broadway star

Rachel Kasper deBenedet of Eldorado Springs, Colo., is the recipient of Bethel College's Young Alumnus Award for 2005. Kasper deBenedet presented a program March 21 at the North Newton, Kan., campus on "From Bethel to Broadway: A Mennonite in Showbiz." Her Broadway credits include *Nine, The Sound of Music*, and she is currently playing in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels.—Bethel College*

Breakfast by Ezekiel

A family-owned bakery in California, has produced a breakfast cereal called Ezekiel 4:9, which says, "Take also unto thee wheat and barley and beans and lentils and millet and spelt and put them in one vessel and make bread of it." A message on the package says that "when these six grains and legumes are combined, … a complete protein is created that closely parallels the protein found in milk and eggs." The message goes on to say, "This biblical cereal is truly the staff of life." —*The Marketplace*

Making peace with

evangelism
evangelism
evangelism
GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS
evangelis
evangelism

evangelism

A personal exploration of what evangelism can be in this time between the modern and postmodern eras

by Amy Spencer

My sister called from her small frontier town in northern Minnesota and talked about a small group she attends where they talk about faith and Christianity and all that.

"Wait," I said to this sister who hasn't entered the door of a church for years, as far as I know. "What are you talking about?"

"Didn't I tell you I've been going to an Alpha course? Dad and Lou have been telling me faith would really help me get through these hard times, so I thought I'd try it."

I was, to put it calmly, shocked. I'm the one who prides herself on knowing everything there is to know about evangelism and outreach, yet someone near and dear to me—someone who, by the way, I had rarely talked with about God—was telling me she was getting closer to God without my aid. After my shock, I felt delighted to the point of effervescence. And as she talked on, I also was enlightened.

A matter of opinion: I'm one who wanted everyone to find God, know Jesus, enjoy the Spirit (except, it seems, my family members?). Thus I find it stressful living between the modern and postmodern eras. How do I answer my sister when she says, "It doesn't matter which train you're on, they all go to the same place." How do we bridge these treacherously broad gaps between rationalism and relativity, between truth and experience? How do we share faith in a world teetering between black-and-white and mish-mash? Maybe these aren't even the right questions.

Let me give examples of the divide. The evangelical authors I edit for (who tend to be modernists) keep pushing classical American evangelization, saying, "Tell the lost person that Jesus died as a sacrifice for his sins and that if he accepts that, he is saved." It's a matter of setting down a few facts about Jesus and having the person acquiesce. (That may be an oversimplification, but not by much.)

Then there are my social activist, mostly Mennonite, friends (of a more postmodern tint), who look at me cross-eyed when I suggest that we may want to be talking about the gospel in whatever ways we can. Sure, St. Francis had a good point when he said, "Preach the gospel and when necessary use words," but look at people like my sister. She needed people to talk to about God—and I never offered.

So here I am, pinched, having no idea where to go.

I'm the one who prides herself on knowing everything there is to know about evangelism and outreach, yet someone near and dear to me was telling me she was getting closer to God without my aid.

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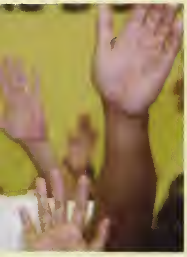


A matter of the Trinity: My sister made it clear that she is turned off by the rational arguments in the Alpha videos … and that she doesn't yet "get the Jesus thing." (Yes, yet. She is open to learning and changing.)

People have problems with Jesus for any number of reasons. Most American Christians tend to focus strongly on him, almost to the exclusion of the other Two in the Trinity (unless, of course, we're at war, when the "warrior God" of the Old Testament can come in handy). And I know this Jesus-tilt is true in my own life, as I am a product of the Jesus-freak '70s.

I resist pulling any focus away from Jesus, as an Anabaptist and as a sorta-evangelical. After all, what is faith without him? Yet I believe a little balance would do our evangelism—and our wandering friends and relatives—good.

I've been discovering Celtic Christianity lately, and I think my sister can relate to it better than to what she hears from most American churched folks. The Celts seemed to have a good grasp of the Trinity: the Creator, the Spirit, the Son.

Maybe we're afraid of what the Spirit may do to us if we say yes to whatever. It may make us weird. Or do we resist mystery itself?

To start my sister out with the Christian view of the Creator would help her understand "the Jesus thing," I think. If only she could get a glimpse of this great, generous God who made her and me and everyone and this awe-inspiring, complex environment in which we live. As a naturalist, she's into things created, and I think many people are (proof: the huge number of environmental studies degrees being offered these days).

But a problem arises for some of us. To carry on about the wonder of all God's creative doings, we have to appreciate creation. But if we appreciate creation, we will be confronted with our lack of care for creation—including our own bodies. We may recognize that this has resulted from our greed, materialism, workaholism and/or self-abuse. And that means we'll have to change, repent. Maybe that's one reason we avoid the Creator and focus on Jesus when sharing faith.

What about the Spirit? This God-Wind who blows here and there, touching this and that person, this culture and that. Has that seemed too spooky, too indefinable, too weird for the church world to talk about with the unchurched world? If it can't be quantified and listed and understandable, we can't fit it on a three-by-five tract, can we?

But maybe there's something deeper. Maybe we're afraid of this mystery; we're afraid of what the Spirit may do to us if we say yes to whatever. It may make us weird. Or do we resist mystery itself?

A matter of answers: As a disciple of Jesus, I grew up with leaders telling me I had to answer others' questions correctly (a.k.a. coercively) if I wanted to be an "effective witness." Thus I was given lists of questions with the "right" answers. (I think the answer to What about other religions? went something like, "That's their problem.")

Yes, Peter says, "Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15-16). Yes, there is room for theological study. Yet my sister, for one, is not looking for theologically astute answers at this point. She is looking for me to answer questions like this: How did you come to believe all the Christian stuff? What has happened in your life now that you are a Christian? And how did American Christianity get so screwy? And I hope I can answer her clearly—on the first two, anyway.

A matter of love: My sister is looking for God. She is looking for hope. She is looking for love. (And aren't we all?)

While she isn't interested in arguments (despite the fact that she is frightfully intelligent), she is fascinated by stories of people's experiences with God—their conversion stories and their everyday praying-growing-groping life stories. She loves talking about God, of all things. And she likes the people in her group, who accept her and aren't looking for ordinary answers—or giving them either.

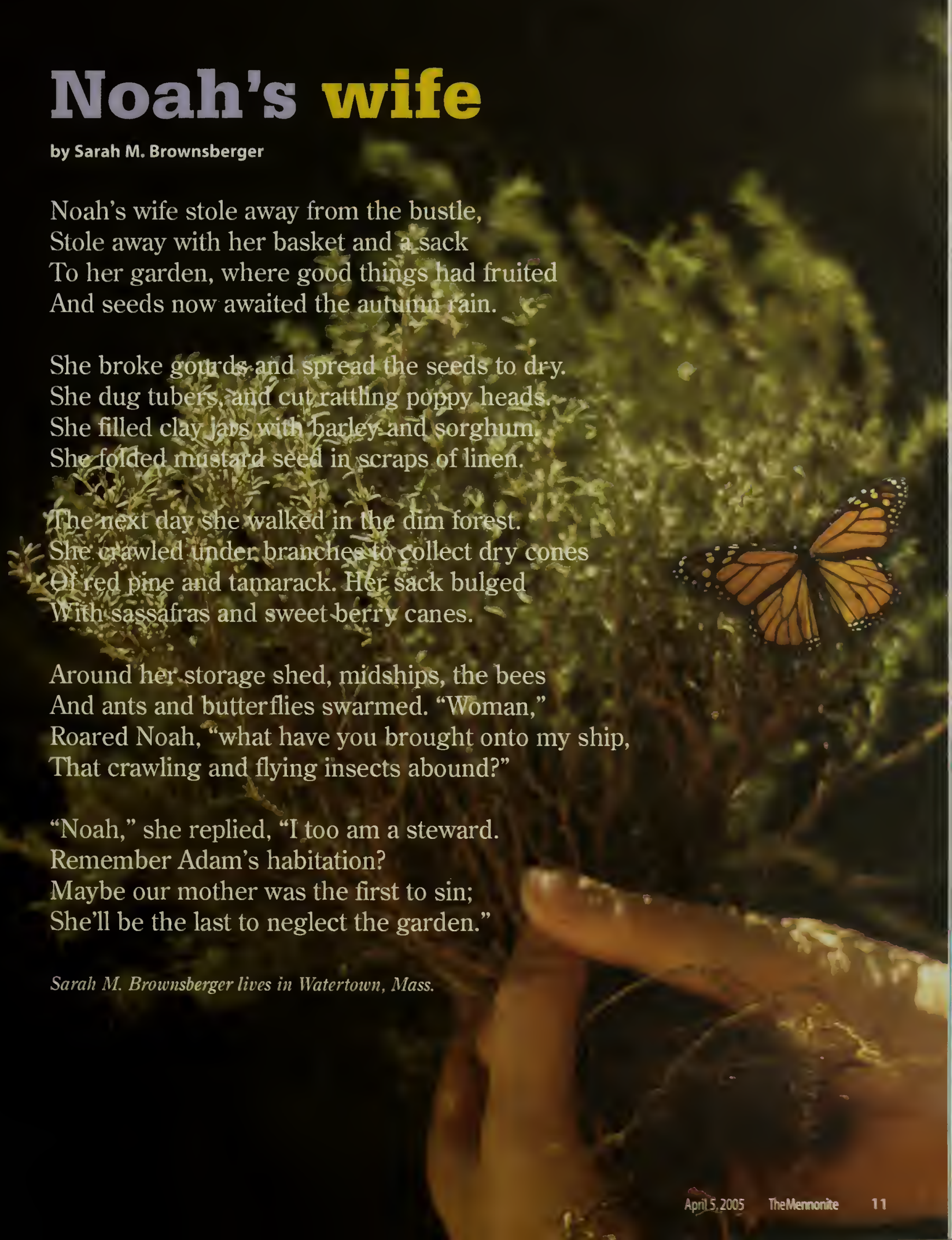
Maybe this is what evangelism is all about for me: It's about me chilling, not being afraid to express what I know. It's about me asking, What about faith? What about God? instead of waiting for someone to ask me. It's about me being part of a body open to questions. It's about me loving the ones I'm with.

You too? TM

Amy Spencer lives in Kalona, Iowa.

Noah's wife

by Sarah M. Brownsberger



Noah's wife stole away from the bustle,
Stole away with her basket and a sack
To her garden, where good things had fruited
And seeds now awaited the autumn rain.

She broke gourds and spread the seeds to dry.
She dug tubers, and cut rattling poppy heads.
She filled clay jars with barley and sorghum.
She folded mustard seed in scraps of linen.

The next day she walked in the dim forest.
She crawled under branches to collect dry cones
Of red pine and tamarack. Her sack bulged
With sassafras and sweet berry canes.

Around her storage shed, midships, the bees
And ants and butterflies swarmed. "Woman,"
Roared Noah, "what have you brought onto my ship,
That crawling and flying insects abound?"

"Noah," she replied, "I too am a steward.
Remember Adam's habitation?
Maybe our mother was the first to sin;
She'll be the last to neglect the garden."

Sarah M. Brownsberger lives in Watertown, Mass.

Dottie Kauffmann/College Mennonite

Church hopping

by Karen F. Nofziger

This past year I had the opportunity to attend many different churches. At first I intended to visit only a few, then decide on one I would attend regularly. However, I became intrigued by the variety of approaches churches take toward visitors, and I decided to reflect on these practices. I came away with definite ideas about greeters, ushers, building introductions and follow-up.

Over the course of a year I attended 10 congregations (seven Mennonite, one Evangelical Mennonite, one Lutheran and one Quaker) ranging in membership from 80 to 1,000. Most were within a 15-mile radius of my temporary home in Ohio.

I encountered a wide range of greeting situations. Most typical was a couple or a family stationed at the door. In two situations, when there was no one at the door, I had a hard time finding my way to the sanctuary and a Sunday school class. Greeters need to understand their purpose in being at the door.

Greeters must make all feel welcome and especially be on the look out for people they do not know. It is not a time to take care of other church business. In one situation the greeters carried on a conversation with the couple ahead of me (obviously people they knew well). I waited, then walked on by without them speaking to me.

> **Greeters must make all feel welcome and especially be on the look out for people they do not know. It is not a time to take care of other church business.**

Placement is important. Greeters cannot expect visitors to come to them; the visitor must be approached. Greeters must be stationed where they are the first ones a visitor sees. At one church I could easily enter, turn right or left, and completely miss the greeters. The first time I attended, the couple invited me to sign the guest registry and introduced themselves to me, but several times I attended and never shook hands with the greeters because they were busy.

It is important for greeters to introduce themselves to anyone they have not had the chance to meet before, even if they know the person has attended several times.

Another important step in the welcoming process is the ushers. In most congregations I attended, ushers sat people in the sanctuary. This has potential to be a wonderful opportunity, but often it is handled awkwardly. Most ushers ask where you want to sit. Being new at a church, I found this an unusual question since I didn't know where or with whom I wanted to sit.

Lessons about church greeters, ushers, building introductions and follow-up brings mixed results

Here are some suggestions for ushers: I was glad to be seated next to someone who talked to me. Once an usher suggested I sit with the pastor's wife at the front of the church. This was a great place to sit. She talked to me, asked my name, wanted to know if I wanted to be introduced during sharing time and instructed me on where to find coffee after church.

It is not helpful to seat a visitor in a pew alone. At one church I was alone in a pew and felt conspicuous. The pews eventually filled, but not until after the service had started.

Ushers need to introduce themselves to people they do not know. Choose ushers gifted in this area. At some congregations the ushers were not outgoing or seemed not to want to meet people they did not know. They should also know people in the congregation who take notice of visitors.

It is not only the usher's responsibility to make visitors feel welcome. Several times others asked if I wanted to sit with them. This is something every member can work at.

Another difficult area for visitors is finding their way around the church and locating a Sunday school class. This again varied greatly from one congregation to another.

At one congregation several people asked me if I knew where the restroom was located, where the coffee was and if I needed help finding a class. I welcomed this.

It was refreshing at one congregation (the Evangelical Mennonite church) when a lady sat next to me in the church service, introduced herself, stayed with me in the coffee area, chatted, introduced me to others, then took me to class with her. She told me she had been new at that church a few years earlier and now tries to make visitors feel welcome. She does a wonderful job. Unfortunately, this seems to be rare.

I was also curious as to how congregations followed up with visitors. I found this varied greatly. Some things felt good, while others seemed forced.

The congregation where I signed the guest registry sent a note written by the church secretary.

I received a phone call and a loaf of bread from one congregation. The person who called and visited was a designated welcome committee member. He found out about my being at his church from someone who attends regularly.

One congregation had an insert in the bulletin for people to write prayer requests and for visitors to fill out pertinent information. However, I did not have a pen, and one was not provided in the pew.

Another church had a bulletin insert for visitors and provided a pen. The information resulted in my receiving a brochure with information about the church, the latest monthly newsletter and a stamped self-addressed postcard asking for "My First Impression." This was impressive—a church that wants to know how they did in making me feel welcome. I actually took the time to call the person who sent the cover letter and talked with her about my experience and about the use of these postcards. She told me that since I had marked "member of a congregation" I would not be getting a phone call from a pastor, but that is also part of their welcoming procedure.

I did receive one phone call from a pastor at a congregation where I signed a pad passed along the pew. This pastor also knew I had marked "member of a congregation," but he said he wanted to introduce himself to me and asked if I had any questions about their church. I don't know how this would feel if I were not a regular churchgoer, but I appreciated the time and effort it took to welcome me in that way.

Two other congregations marked my presence at their churches by sending a signed form letter from the pastor.

I have gained a new appreciation for the need to make our churches user-friendly. Maybe more of us should visit congregations so we know what it feels like to be a visitor. It is important for regular attendees to be salespeople and not just consumers. It takes everyone to make an effort. A church cannot be too friendly.

Karen F. Nofziger is a member of Souderton Mennonite Church in Telford, Pa.

A lady sat next to me in the church service, introduced herself, stayed with me in the coffee area, chatted, introduced me to others, then took me to class with her.

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From blues to church

A young Mennonite's faith journey

by Jennifer Szambecki

I yelled over the deafening din, “Why aren't you out on stage?” The other three band members had assembled on the dimly lit stage, playing loud blues music into the small, smoky venue.

At 6 years old, I didn't realize that the person I was talking to was the lead singer of the band. I sat on a speaker box off to the side of the stage, at a bar that anyone in Wichita, Kan., who loved blues music in the 1980s will remember: The Blue Note Café. The person standing in front of me was Delbert McClinton, a notable, national blues musician who graced Wichita with his presence that Friday night in 1986.

Delbert just winked at me as he sauntered out onto the stage. The crowd went wild. As he belted out one of his rock-a-billy songs, he looked back at me sitting off-stage and winked again. I then understood his status, his delay in entering the stage, and I knew I was in the presence of greatness.

> You may ask, What was a 6-year-old doing at a smoky bar in Wichita, listening to blues? Yet there was nothing unusual about this for me.

You may ask, What was a 6-year-old doing at a smoky bar in Wichita, listening to blues? Yet there was nothing unusual about this for me.

My parents were far more likely to take my older brother and me to a blues bar than to church. As a matter of fact, we never went to church as a family. My parents were nonbelievers. Both of them had had negative experiences with “organized religion” growing up, and they were determined not to raise their children as bigots, hypocrites or lemmings—which was how they perceived Christians—and who could blame them? While many of you were memorizing the Doxology and 606, I was memorizing Michael Jackson and BB King songs.

Nothing unusual: Jennifer with her father at the piano

I never questioned the way I was raised until I was much older. My dad had always been in blues bands and owned a successful small business. My mom was a regular on the young, urban professionals scene in Wichita. They participated in recreational activities that would make most Mennonites blush. They raised my brother and me to believe as the world believes: If it feels good, it must be OK.

Also notable was the high value they gave education and intellect. When I showed signs of being "one of the smart kids," they never stopped feeding me books, praising me for my scholarly accomplishments and encouraging my pursuit of higher and higher education.

Looking through the lenses this upbringing provided led me to one conclusion: Being smart and successful is the most important thing, and Christians are neither smart nor successful. Therefore, if I wanted to be perceived as smart, I had to stay as far away from Christianity as possible.

Fast forward to my college years at Wichita State University. My parents had long-since divorced, and my mom had remarried a fellow nonbeliever. I was on the path of the average child of divorce until something exceptional happened. My father met and fell in love with a nice Mennonite woman from Goessel, Kan. He began attending church with her at Shalom Mennonite in Newton, Kan. He met people—Christians, no less—who were intelligent, accepting and aware of their broken, desperate need for Jesus. It was the Christianity he had never experienced but had always longed for. He was home.

At the time, I was still reeling from my parents' divorce as well as my burgeoning inability to experience healthy, loving relationships. I attended Shalom, though irregularly. I also began reading books about Jesus and Christianity, more as an attempt to disprove the ideas than to accept them. But God is stealthy: He knew he would have to reach my head before he could reach my heart.

The Lord confronted me with open-minded believers, unconditionally loving followers and brilliant scholars who just happened to be Christian. Slowly, every wall my parents had built up around me was chipped away. Not long after my conversion experience, I wrote the following:

You knocked on my door quietly, intentionally. I heard the knock but did not open the door, or I ignored the knock altogether. I could see your light shining under the door but turned my eyes from it, buried my head or tried to block it with blankets and towels. My dark room was comfortable, as was the pain. In the darkness I could feel my way around but blamed my tripping and falling on the blindness. I walked around the room the way one walks in the dark: unsure but pressing forward until I hit something, anything.

At the same time that I found such comfort in the darkness, my eyes strained for what little light reflected from under the door on which you knocked; my legs and arms grew sore from bumping into so many things in my blindness. I wondered what was in that room that I could not see.

The Lord confronted me with open-minded believers, unconditionally loving followers and brilliant scholars who just happened to be Christian.

But I convinced myself that what little I could see from the light coming through was enough, that the fact that I could make out silhouettes was the same as seeing the whole picture of what was in front of me. I stumbled, unsure, desperate for my eyes to adjust in what seemed like unending darkness.

You knocked a little louder from time to time. You shone your light even brighter. But with the door so tightly shut, it remained dark in my room.

With tired eyes and bleeding shins, I stood before the door. I had tried to see in the dark, to feel my way around in my blindness, to find my own way. And all I was left with were tired eyes and bleeding shins … still lost, still broken, still empty, looking at a door I had long assumed was bolted shut.

Continued on page 16

Mennonite Mission Network

What are we doing to ensure that our family, our church and our community are welcoming people like my father and me into the Mennonite way of doing Christianity?

—Jennifer Szambecki

Continued from page 15

But what little light you shed allowed me to see that the door was not bolted; it wasn't locked or even latched. I had to do nothing more than lift my hand to the knob and pull.

So I did.

Light flooded that room of mine. Every corner, every crevasse, every object shone. Pictures and books and keepsakes that once were colorless silhouettes shone with the brilliant colors you always intended me to see.

It was not like walking out of a movie theater on a sunny day: My eyes did not need to adjust. My pupils were perfectly dilated for the amount of light coming from the other side of the door, which I had refused for so long to open.

I could see my way around that room of mine now. I could see—where, for a lifetime, I had been too blinded by the darkness to see—the areas that needed to be dusted and cleaned. I could observe with new eyes what I'd been awkwardly trying to feel with my hands, blindly, for so long. Best of all, I could see—on the other side of the easiest (and hardest) door in the world to open—the One who had been knocking all along.

And I fell to my knees before him and wept.

How faithful he'd been in knocking. He knew my mocking thoughts on the other side of the door; he saw my eyes roll. But he waited, knowing exactly how many knocks it would take for me to realize that on the other side of the that door, where all the knocking was coming from, was the Light I so desperately longed for, the guidance my step demanded. In his perfect time, I opened his perfect door to his perfect room.

When it was dark, I thought it was my room, because I controlled when and where I could see the objects before me. But I could not see and had no control at all. I was doing a deadly job of finding my way around that room, until I realized I could only live in that room when I surrendered to the fact that it was his room, filled with his light.

Now I see it all. (Based on John 3:19-21)

I am excited to represent the changing face of Mennonitism. I am thankful for the upbringing my parents gave me, smoky bars and all. Without that experience, I would not be in the position I am in to help usher in new generations and populations of Mennonites.

Chances are good that if you're reading this, you were raised in a much more typical Christian, if not Mennonite, environment than I was. Don't let that stop you from seeing people—men, women and children; young and old; black, white and everything in between—as the broken, questioning souls they are. What are we doing to ensure that our family, our church and our community are welcoming people like my father and me into the Mennonite way of doing Christianity? Because if people as cynical and seemingly hopeless as he and I were can be drawn into faith from the Mennonite perspective, anyone can. TM

Jennifer Szambecki is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan.

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window

Spring 2005
Volume 15 Issue 2

2 Resources for learning about worship available to everyone
3 Emphasizing collaboration in preparing for worship
4 President's Window
Panorama

Technology:
How will it help us worship?

The printing press, the clock, air conditioning, microphones and projectors all have changed our patterns of worship. With video recording and playback, PowerPoint and the Internet, change continues.

Rebecca Slough, AMBS associate professor of worship and the arts, says the primary question congregations must consider is: "How will these tools serve the congregation's gathered worship?"

She asked that question more than once during a workshop on using technology in worship during AMBS Pastors Week at the end of January. Change has been with the Christian church from the beginning, she reminded participants. As we incorporate new resources into our worship, we need to use them wisely and be aware of what will be different because of them. "Whenever we introduce something new, it changes the way we act and the way we interact with others in the service," Rebecca said.

Using technology to project words or images for worship can achieve a variety of benefits for those who worship. Lyrics projected without the musical notes can show us the structure of a song. Still images, because they are different from the moving images we are more used to, can quiet us and lead us into prayer and contemplation. Studying an image for a period of time—also different from our usual experience of viewing moving images or skimming print materials—can create a deeper response in us.

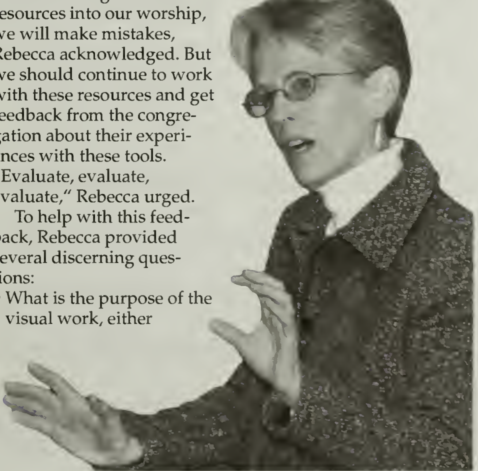
At the same time, we need to recognize that integrating these elements into our worship asks something different of us. We may need to learn new skills for how to read hymn texts. We may need to learn new ways of looking at images so that we can be open to the potential for contemplation or prayer.

As we bring these resources into our worship, we will make mistakes, Rebecca acknowledged. But we should continue to work with these resources and get feedback from the congregation about their experiences with these tools. "Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate," Rebecca urged.

To help with this feedback, Rebecca provided several discerning questions:

- What is the purpose of the visual work, either text or image, in the service?
- How will worshippers engage the work? (read, contemplate, sing, etc)?
- What interpretive skills are needed for worshippers to understand the work?
- What worship action will this work aid or accomplish?
- How will worshippers respond to the work?

Most of all, we need to continually ask: How does this help us pray, sing, praise, listen or speak to God more fully? How does this serve the congregation's gathered worship? ●



Mary E. Klassen

Resources for learning about worship available to everyone

Even if you are not a student at AMBS, you can use AMBS resources to learn about worship ... and you can benefit from the many ways in which learning about worship pervade the curriculum at AMBS.

Worship Planner workshops: One-day workshops at AMBS are available to all who help plan and lead worship. These events are scheduled regularly each year for the seasons of Advent and Lent. The entire range of worship planning—prayers, drama, oral interpretation of scripture, preaching, music, visual elements and symbols—is included.

A Worship Planner for Ordinary Time is planned for August 6, 2005.

AMBS degree programs and courses: Students pursuing five of seven degrees offered by AMBS are required to take a foundational course in worship and preaching. All programs that prepare people for pastoral ministry, for pastoral counseling, for youth ministry and for mission and evangelism require this basic course. Only students in the programs that prepare them for further academic study or teaching are exempt from this requirement.

In addition to the basic requirement, AMBS offers a wide variety of worship courses, including Celebrating the Christian Year, Worship and Mission, Hymn and Song Leading, Drama in Worship, Advanced Preaching, Communion and many more.

Master of Arts in Christian Formation focus in worship: AMBS offers a focus specifically on worship in the two-year Master of Arts in Christian Formation. This program of study prepares people to work on a pastoral team in a congregation or in a conference or retreat setting where the main assignment is to plan and lead worship.

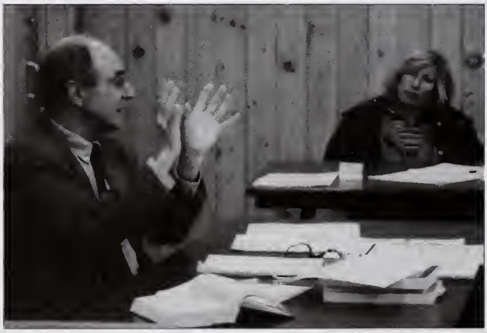
Undergraduate distance education: Students in Pastoral Studies Distance Education (PSDE) and Journey: A Conference-based Leadership Development Program, both undergraduate programs for ministry preparation, take one unit of study, called "Salt and Light: Preaching, Worship, Evangelism." This unit, one of five in the program, helps students learn about planning and leading worship. ●

The PSDE program and the worship planner events are coordinated by the AMBS Church Leadership Center.

I learned how important rituals and symbols are to shaping full-bodied worship and rich congregational life. I also got in touch with how much I and other Mennonites are starved for rituals and symbols. We are a "word" tradition but are bringing balance to our respect for scripture by enfleshing those words in sounds, sights, tastes and movements.

I am news service director for Mennonite Church USA and serve as a chapel committee member in the denomination's Executive Leadership offices in Newton, Kan. I have gleaned understandings and practices from the class that help shape my input on the committee.

– Laurie Oswald, participant in summer class, Celebrating Christian Ritual in Worship



John Rempel, assistant professor of theology and Anabaptist studies, taught the course, History of Christian Worship, during the fall semester. John has published several books on worship, including *The Lord's Supper in Anabaptism* (Herald Press, 1993), and he served on the worship committee for *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Laurie Oswald and Homare Miyazaki lead singing in a summer class at AMBS that focused on how rituals can help us worship.

Worship nourishes our souls just as food nourishes our bodies, Marlene Kropf says. So *Preparing Sunday Dinner* is the working title of the upcoming book on worship and preaching by Marlene, June Alliman Yoder and Rebecca Slough.

Emphasizing collaboration in preparing for worship

Worship and preaching happen together—preaching is always done in the context of worship and worship often includes a sermon or message. That is why three AMBS professors are developing a book that encourages collaboration in these important parts of congregational life.

June Alliman Yoder, professor of preaching and communication; Rebecca Slough, associate professor of music and the arts; and Marlene Kropf, associate professor in spiritual formation and worship, are developing this book in part from their experiences of team-teaching "Foundations of Worship and Preaching" at AMBS. Worship and preaching are taught separately, June said, so this book is unusual in its approach. "It grows out of our roots as a community of interpreters."

With the working title *Preparing Sunday Dinner*, it addresses steps of planning, preparing, and hosting worship, comparing them to steps in serving a meal. It emphasizes the value of worship planners and preachers working together to prepare for what the congregation will experience.

Herald Press will publish the book with a release date in late summer. ●

Prayer resource

Take Our Moments and Our Days: An Anabaptist Prayer Book provides a two-week cycle of morning and evening prayers with themes that are especially important in the Anabaptist tradition. See more at **www.ambs.edu/prayerbook**. Find information there about how to purchase copies from the AMBS Cooperative Bookstore and Pandora Press in Kitchener, Ont.

The editorial committee is Arthur Paul Boers, Gloria Jost, Eleanor Kreider and John Rempel. ●

Call to Worship

We come together this morning
as people who have much in common:
we are God-formed, God-created, declared to be good.
We come together as people of God
to declare the praise of God.
In the middle of our morning tiredness and mountains
of questions,
in the middle of our unspoken expectations
and searching for hope,
we bring our lives to worship God.
The unchanging God who is the same
yesterday, today and forever.
Use the strength of your breath this morning
to praise God together with one voice.

Written by AMBS student Lois Siemens for Pastors Week, January 2003.

Campaign Report

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

The Chapel of the Word, a small chapel for teaching worship and preaching converted from a classroom, is the first fully-funded project of the Next Generation campaign.

Next Generation, the fund-raising effort of AMBS, includes the following components. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 2.28.05
AMBS Fund	$ 5,800,000	Ongoing
Library and campus center	6,300,000	$3,790,169
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	22,400
Preaching laboratory	170,000	Fully funded
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,310,209
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,595,005
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,178,623
Other		467,853
Total	**$20,000,000**	**$16,383,348** **82%**

President's Window

In the earliest reference to Christians in official government records (A.D. 112), a Roman governor named Pliny described what he had learned about Christian devotion by interrogating believers who were on trial:

> their entire guilt or error consisted in the fact that on a specified day [Sunday] before sunrise they were accustomed to gather and sing an antiphonal hymn to Christ as their god and to pledge themselves by an oath not to engage in any crime, but to abstain from all thievery, assault and adultery, not to break their word once they had given it, and not to refuse to pay their legal debts.

Even an opponent such as Pliny recognized that worship was at the center of Christian faith—and that worship made an impact on the ethical behavior of believers.

We become like what we worship. Worship is about allegiance, about offering our lives to something or someone greater than ourselves.

Rituals of allegiance abound in our world. Our society bows to fluctuations of the stock market, genuflects to the latest technology, sacrifices for a prestigious education and glosses over injustice when we tell the story of our nation. With rituals to countless gods all around us, it is vital for Christians to have daily and weekly cycles of worship that reorient us to God and to the Lamb.

At AMBS in the past year there has been a burst of emphasis on worship. We have seen a new Anabaptist daily office (*Take Our Moments and Our Days*), a new facility for classes in preaching and worship (Chapel of the Word) and a soon-to-be released book on worship leading (*Preparing Sunday Dinner*). Faculty and students have made regular chapels life-giving, and community prayer for joys and concerns has been common.

During this year of worship renewal at AMBS, students have organized construction of a Habitat for Humanity house. When followers of Jesus daily give devotion to the God made known in Jesus, we become like Christ—serving, building bridges and speaking good news of healing and hope.

If we were on trial for being Christians, would there be enough evidence to convict us, and would others see how worship changes our behavior?

– J. Nelson Kraybill

Alumni News

Two AMBS graduates and one current student earned places in the 2004 John Horsch Mennonite History Essay Contest. **H. Jean Hess** (Master of Arts in Theological Studies 2004), Keith Benner, current Master of Divinity student, and **Tamara Sawatzky** (Master of Arts in Theological Studies 2002).

Linda Gehman Peachey (Master of Divinity 2004) is director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Concerns Program.

Walter Bergen (Master of Divinity 1992) is vice president for advancement at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.

Kelly Carson (Master of Divinity 2000) was ordained Jan. 16 at Chicago Community Mennonite Church for chaplaincy work.

Panorama

"Not going as planned"

"If I look back at my high-school yearbook, I am certain I wouldn't find 'Most Likely to Attend Seminary' anywhere near my photo. I've learned, however, that just because things aren't going as planned, doesn't mean they aren't going as they should." Nekeisha Alexis-Baker, AMBS student and staff person with Mennonite Mission Network, tells some of the story of how she came to AMBS on the AMBS web site. Her story, and the stories of other students, can be found by going to **www.ambs.edu;** select *Admissions and Financial Aid*, then *Student Stories.*

Teaching the Sunday School Lesson

Each quarter, AMBS offers a workshop for teachers of the Uniform Lesson series. Videos of these sessions, in both VHS and DVD formats are available. For more information, call the AMBS Church Leadership Center, 574.296.6207, or see the web site: **www.ambs.edu;** select *Church Leadership Center*, then *Continuing Education.*

The 1866 Wadsworth bell and a new bell tower were installed on campus on December 16, 2004. The bell, which used to call people to worship in the first Mennonite institution of higher education in North America, now calls student and faculty to worship at AMBS.

Spring 2005
Volume 15 Issue 2

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos by Mary E. Klassen

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A call for following a different church-growth strategy

The birds-of-a-feather principle

by Leo Hartshorn

For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?—Matthew 5:46-47

Not only do we know the saying about birds of a feather, we practice it. Some call this "homogeneous congregations," congregations similar in race, class, education, politics and theological perspective. It's natural to gravitate toward people like us. I enjoy being around people who share similar interests with me. Working at a relationship with someone different can be exhausting.

We grow up in flocks of our own kind of birds. We teach the birds-of-a-feather principle to our children. Our child introduces a new friend from that family across town and gets a crooked smile or a concerned look. "Johnny, what happened to your old friend David across the street?" In high school the birds were marked as nerds, brains, jocks, head bangers, surfers or whatever label fits the era and area in which we grew up. And as an adult a big part of getting and keeping a job has been about fitting in with the other birds.

There may be certain benefits to homogeneous congregations. Having been a pastor of a diverse urban congregation, I recall the headaches that went with the hard work of trying to hold together a small flock that had many members with different views on faith and church life. I also have been pastor of homogeneous congregations that chose smaller and less significant issues to differ over. Even so, when people share common views on the world, the Word and worship, there is a greater chance of having a unified church. Homogeneous can mean harmonious. And some of the largest, fastest-growing churches are homogeneous. Who doesn't want to have a growing church?

Some have baptized this principle of homogeneity and elevated it to a strategy for church growth. They call it "target-group evangelism." I call it the birds-of-a-feather principle. If you want to grow your church, find your target audience, people in the community who are like you. Give them a stereotypical name and face. Go after them. These are the people who will most likely become part of your congregation. It's only natural. This strategy has been utilized by some of the nation's fastest-growing churches and many wanna-be-birds are chirping over it. This marketing strategy has even been justified by pointing to Jesus as the Bird-of-a-Feather practitioner par excellance. Didn't Jesus practice this mission strategy when he said, "I was sent only to the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24)?

Then again, there was that bird who challenged this mission strategy—the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:21-28). She questioned Jesus' Israelites-only policy, and Jesus ended up affirming her faith. As a matter of fact, she changed his mind.

Some of our leaders and congregations need their minds changed about this birds-of-a-feather principle, whether it is used as a church-growth strategy or it just happens naturally. My vision for mission has been broadened by the faith of those leaders and congregations who challenge this principle, even when it doesn't pay off with increasing numbers. I want to affirm them for their faith.

I want to say, "Great is your faith" to all those people who resist homogeneity for the sake of an inclusive gospel.

God bless that white congregation that struggles to become racially diverse because they believe that is what church should be. I say amen to that small, rural congregation that reaches out to everyone in the community, though they have lost members in the process. I want to shout hallelujah to that middle-class, urban church that opens its doors to the poor, homeless and troubled, though it can be an emotional and financial drain.

I want to say, "Great is your faith" to all those people who resist homogeneity for the sake of an inclusive gospel. These people and congregations model a faith that flies in the face of the birds-of-a-feather principle. Maybe they can change our minds and hearts about what it means to be missional. TM

Leo Hartshorn is minister of peace and justice for Mennonite Mission Network.

Looking for a biblical bumper sticker

Dave Alleman is a member of Deavers Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va.

The red car had a bumper sticker with an icon of the earth and the words "God bless everyone." I would rather display that message than the more common "God bless" bumper stickers. But I wondered which is the more biblical prayer? (I have nothing against pagans asking their deity to bless America, but I assumed that most displaying the slogan are Christian.)

"God Bless America" was a song by Irving Berlin, written in 1918 and revised in 1938. He was expressing his hope that war would end or would not come to America. Later uses of the song seem to mean, "bless our war effort." (For more information see the Library of Congress Web site, www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm019.html.)

My new computer concordance found 390 hits on "bless," "blessing" or "blessed" (New International Version). I found only one place where the prayer "bless us" occurred, in Psalm 67. The parallel prayer, "bless me," occurs four times (in the NIV). "God bless me" was widely publicized in the booklet *The Prayer of Jabez*, written by a Bible teacher. He does not discuss other pray-ers of this pray or the most common context of "blessing prayers." Why? Likely because source of the occurrences in the NIV come on the lips of men not usually considered models for our praying. (It is possible that some consider "God bless" to be a wish or hope, not a direct appeal to God.)

> Jesus also said we would be blessed when we are poor in spirit, mourn, meek, pure in heart, merciful, seeking right relationships (righteousness), peacemakers. Can I get that on a bumper sticker?

The first "bless me" prayer came to his home famished from hunting. His brother had a bowl of stew ready to eat. The cook demanded that the hunter give him their father's blessing. The hunter, the firstborn, gave the father's blessing to the cook for the bowl of stew. Later, when he discovered that Jacob had actually received the blessing from their father, Esau said to Isaac, their father, "Bless me, too, my father."

After 40 years of exile to escape Esau's anger for gaining their father's blessing, as Jacob was returning to his homeland, he was met by a "man." He wrestled with this man all night, trying to gain control. Then he tried to get the man to tell him his name. Later, the man gave him a new name, Israel. Jacob refused to let go of this messenger from God, asking the messenger to bless him.

Years later and miles away, a ruler had just seen his country devastated by flood, hail and frogs. He awoke one night to find that his firstborn son had died, just as the prophet said would happen. Then Pharaoh called Moses and said he and his people could take what they wanted and go where they wanted, and he said, "But bless me."

Are Esau or Pharaoh models for praying? Jacob, Jabez? I am not sure.

Is bless me/us/everyone an appropriate prayer for God's people? My study raises questions about how God's blessings come. Most often God or his spokespeople promise blessings as a result of something else.

Here is one example from the Hebrew Bible (many other verses repeat this theme): "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today" (Deuteronomy 11:26-27, NIV).

Other passages say those are blessed who worship, trust or serve God—also those who are forgiven, tithe or study God's Word. In nearly every scripture where the word bless appears, some form of attitude or behavior is recommended. In the New Testament, Jesus hears some pronounce a blessing on his mother. He replies, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28).

Is the answer to my question of which is the more biblical prayer—bless me, bless us, bless everyone—"none of the above"? Perhaps we could pray wisely if we looked to Jesus' words in his talk on the mountain. The prayer he taught his disciples may contain a parallel to bless us: "Give us this day our daily bread."

Jesus also said we would be blessed when we are poor in spirit, mourn, meek, pure in heart, merciful, seeking right relationships (righteousness), peacemakers. Can I get that on a bumper sticker? TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **God's double agents**—Wally Kroeker
- **Transforming your benevolence ministry**—Jenny Forner

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Epp to leave Bethel College in November

Vice president of academic affairs John Sherriff will serve as interim president.

E. LaVerne Epp

E. LaVerne Epp, president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has told the college's board of directors he plans to step down effective Nov. 15. The board, meeting on campus March 10-12, accepted Epp's decision with regret and expressed deep appreciation for his collaborative leadership in re-energizing the college around its core strengths. The board also approved the appointment of vice president for academic affairs John Sheriff as interim president, following Epp's departure.

"When we called LaVerne to this role," said Dee Gaeddert, board chair from St. Paul, Minn., "he talked much more in terms of what he wanted to accomplish than how long he wanted to be in the role. The skills and experiences that LaVerne has brought us are precisely what Bethel College needs at this point in time.

"We are so pleased that Dr. John Sheriff has accepted the call to serve … as its interim president beginning in November," Gaeddert said. "John has served alongside LaVerne during his presidency and has provided excellent leadership."

Epp, a native of Henderson, Neb., is a 1972 Bethel honors graduate in history and earned a law degree from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 1976. He took office as Bethel's 12th president on Aug. 1, 2002.

"These last three years have been a time of significant change and energy," Epp said. "We have looked carefully at ourselves as a college and have rediscovered our core strengths—the things that, when applied, tangibly and intentionally make us distinctive. … From the beginning, I wanted my time here to be about targeted, achievable results, not about lengthy tenure. This is a normal cycle of leadership for a healthy institution like Bethel that embraces change."

During its spring meetings, the Bethel College board will name a chairperson for a presidential search committee.

"After additional work and focus, next fall will be a good time for us to move into another phase of building this college," Epp said. "My only plans for the next eight months are to work aggressively to position the college for that phase, working with John [Sheriff], the administrative team and the faculty to prepare for it."

Sheriff has been at Bethel for 35 years. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma and is Ernest L. Leisy Professor of English. Since 1997, he has been vice president for academic affairs.

Faculty, staff and administrators working together will make this a dynamic transition rather than an interruption in the life of Bethel College," Sheriff said.—*Melanie Zuercher, Bethel College*

The skills and experiences that LaVerne has brought us are precisely what Bethel College needs at this point in time.
—Dee Gaeddert

Dan Dyck

Mennonite Church Canada leader resigns

Colleagues, council and board members surround Dan Nighswander in a circle of prayer support at Mennonite Church Canada's Leadership Assembly in Winnipeg March 3-5. Nighswander resigned from his role as general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada to more actively pursue "gifts which in this position I have had limited opportunity to exercise."

Although his current term ends in August 2005, conversations between Nighswander and Mennonite Church Canada's General Board led to an agreement to extend his term until May 31, 2006. This extension will include a six-month sabbatical beginning Dec. 1, 2005, during which Nighswander will work on writing the Believers Church Bible Commentary on 1 Corinthians.

Nighswander began his service as conference minister with the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, a predecessor to Mennonite Church Canada, in 1997. In 1999 he was appointed general secretary.—*Mennonite Church Canada News Service*

Damascus Road and beyond

Matthew Lester

Regina Shands Stoltzfus, left, and Hilda Campbell, right, worship at the Damascus and Beyond gathering in Atlanta.

How to mark the distance traveled while measuring the distance remaining was the central dynamic during a March 11-13 gathering in Atlanta to celebrate Damascus Road's 10-year anniversary.

A similar gathering in Chicago in March 1995 launched Damascus Road, an antiracism program initiated by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Called "Restoring Our Sight," that gathering focused on the Acts 9 story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus and "something like scales" falling from his eyes afterward. This year's gathering brought 125 antiracism activists together for the 10-year anniversary.

"This is a celebration of the work of antiracism taking root in the church," Mennonite Mission Network staff member John Powell said to open the event. "[It is a celebration] of people who have gone before and wanted to give up on the church."

"I caution your desire to celebrate," said poet, political activist and author Ewuare Osayande the next morning. "How can we celebrate when racism remains with us? In many cases it has become more vile and destructive. Let's not get too far ahead of ourselves lest we become too far removed from the racism that the masses experience today."

Several leaders reminded the group of roads and events that preceded the 1995 beginning of Damascus Road. Most of their reminiscing focused on developments and challenges they faced in the former Mennonite Church.

Powell, executive secretary for the Minority Ministries Council from 1969 to 1974, became so disillusioned with the church that he eventually left.

"I became the first person of color working for the [denomination]," Powell said, "and getting so fed up, I said, 'To hell with the church and to hell with Christianity.'"

Powell, now living in Syracuse, N.Y., returned to the Mennonite Church in 1993 and serves as director of Missional Church Development for Mennonite Church USA's Mission Network.

Rose Covington, of St. Anne, Ill., reminded the Damascus Road group that other groups were calling the church to racial justice before 1995.

"The privileges you are enjoying today," Covington said, "are because of AAMA [African-American Mennonite Association] and the Minority Ministries Council. Sometimes we would come out of meetings and we didn't know if we were safe or not. Hubert Brown spoke at [Mennonite Church Assembly] Normal 89 and he had to have a police escort because people weren't ready to hear it."

After the Damascus Road initiative took off in 1996, Regina Shands Stoltzfus and Tobin Miller Shearer served as co-coordinators of the initiative until 2002. Stoltzfus continues as a Damascus Road trainer.

Everett J. Thomas

"Challenges to Damascus Road from the Right, the Left and in Between" was a workshop moderated by Holsey Hickman (far right). Panelists from left: John Stoesz, Karl McKinney and Barbara Cuffie

Ten-year anniversary of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. initiative to dismantle racism in the church recounts past events and the challenges ahead.

Everett J. Thomas

Harley Eagle and Marcia Stoesz are co-directors of the antiracism program at MCC U.S. and its Damascus Road initiative.

"I do this work … for the people I love," said Stoltzfus. "Some of my best friends are white people. I want the people I love to know one another … to experience justice and shalom."

Stoltzfus is director of admissions at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind. Shearer lives in Chicago and is researching white Mennonites and race in the 20th century as part of a Ph.D. in religion and history at Northwestern University.

"We're here to also look forward," Shearer said. "We need to bring together love and systematic analysis because they are often pitted against each other. We need holy impatience coupled with long … suffering."

Osayande offered some clarity about what it means to look forward, and it included more than white leaders seeking forgiveness from people of color.

"In the Christian church," Osayande said of efforts at racial justice, "it comes down to forgiveness. But that question is moot. It is irrelevant. My willingness to forgive doesn't matter if you fail to repent. Christ said, 'Where is your fruit?' The fruit of our language today is 'reparation.' What is our position on wrong done?"

Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz, professor of theology and ethics at Drew University, said during her keynote address that the future must also go beyond "melting pot" assumptions in the United States.

"What is at the heart of oppression is exclusion," Isasi-Díaz said. "The problem is not with differences. It is what we do with … those who are different from the dominant culture. We think the only way to deal with differences is to assimilate. … [But] differences constitute the boundaries that make relationships possible. Differences [should] be the point of contact between groups."

The Damascus Road initiative is now in the hands of Harley Eagle and Marcia Stoesz, co-directors of the antiracism program at MCC U.S. Eagle lives in British Columbia but will soon move to Winnipeg. Stoesz lives in Philadelphia.

At the conclusion of the gathering, Eagle and Stoesz directed a caucus process to discern where next the Damascus Road initiative should lead the church. Separate caucuses for whites and for people of color were asked to answer that question.

Upon reconvening, Stoesz explained that she decided to have the group hear only what the people of color caucus thought should happen next. That caucus provided a wall full of flip-chart suggestions that revealed deep commitment to the church and a lively hope for what lies down the road: more focus on antiracism work at the congregational level; finding support for people of color members in the many scattered Damascus Road teams; helping people of color take more control of the work of dismantling racism, mentoring younger people of color and provide training and materials for racial-ethnic youth; reconvene people of color again soon to reshape the work from a racial-ethnic perspective.

The caucus also resolved to work at assuring adequate funding for the work, connecting with the Intercultural Relations office in Mennonite Church USA and using the August 2006 assembly of racial-ethnic leaders to continue the work.—*Everett J. Thomas for Meetinghouse*

We need to bring together love and systematic analysis because they are often pitted against each other.
—Tobin Miller Shearer

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Peace churches face draft possibilities

U.S. consultation promotes stronger peace witness, commitment to service.

A military draft is either not going to happen, possible in some scenarios, or likely, depending on whom you ask. But all who attended an Anabaptist Consultation on Alternative Service March 4-5 in Elgin, Ill., agreed the historic peace churches need to be ready.

The meeting brought together more than 90 people from several Mennonite denominations, the Church of the Brethren, the Brethren in Christ and Friends (Quakers) to address concerns their churches have not faced in such an urgent way since the Vietnam War. Participants talked about how to improve their churches' peace witness, promised to work together on behalf of conscientious objectors if a draft comes and agreed on the importance of countering high-pressure military recruiting. They said their churches need a stronger commitment to Christian service and to teaching Jesus' way of peace, whether there is a draft or not.

> **I predict we're going to have a draft. . . . I hope I'm wrong.**
> —J.E. McNeil

"Should it take a draft to precipitate a visible witness for peace in our congregations?" asked Tim Showalter, a first-year student at Goshen (Ind.) College.

A Selective Service System official told the group no draft is planned.

"The administration's position on the draft is quite simple: There isn't going to be any," said Richard S. Flahavan, associate director of public and intergovernmental affairs for Selective Service.

Others were not so sure. J.E. McNeil, executive director of the Center on Conscience and War, a conscientious objector advocacy group, urged participants to consider the draft a real possibility. Recruitment shortfalls by the National Guard, Army and Marines indicate a draft can't be ruled out, she said.

"I predict we're going to have a draft," McNeil said. "I hope I'm wrong."

Others described the draft as possible if circumstances change.

"There's a possibility that there could be a draft, especially if there were [a U.S.] invasion of Iran or if there were another attack on U.S. soil," said J. Daryl Byler, director of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. Washington Office.

Of more immediate concern, many said, is what some called a "back-door draft": increasingly intensive military recruitment that disproportionately targets youth from racial minority groups and poor communities.

"People of color rarely join the military for patriotic reasons," said Conrad Moore of Lancaster, Pa., a former MCC peace educator and former Marine. "It has always been seen as a way to improve their condition."

Sheri Wiedenhoefer, peace and justice educator for West Coast MCC, said: "If I go to Mennonite churches of color, these kids are being heavily recruited. But when I go to Anglo churches, that issue is so far from them because their sons will never have to go."

Concerns of people of color were prominent in discussions about how to nurture church members' commitment to service at all times, regardless of a draft. Participants also spoke of the challenge of maintaining the churches' peace stance when a significant percentage of members do not agree with it. This percentage varies among the denominations, but it is a concern for all.

Larry Dunn, director of academic programs at the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University, suggested starting by talking about peace between individuals.

"Many are open to the ideals of conflict resolution at a personal level," he said. "This can open the door."

The Council of Moderators and Secretaries will carry forward the issues and concerns raised in the consultation. The meeting was held at the Church of the Brethren general offices in Elgin.—*Paul Schrag for Meetinghouse*

DISCOVERING THE WORLD FOR 35 YEARS

2005 TOURS

SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS (June 17 - July 1)
SMALL TOWN THEATRES and COUNTRY GARDENS (July 26 - August 1)
EXPERIENCING the BIBLE in ISRAEL (Aug. 17-27)
EUROPEAN FALL HARVEST (Sept. 22 - Oct. 6)
EGYPT with MEDA (October 9-21)
FOLLOWING JESUS in ISRAEL (October 19-31)
In the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL (November 6-22)

2006 TOURS

EXPERIENCING JAMAICA, its CULTURE and PEOPLE (January 13-20)
SERVICE TOUR in SUNNY JAMAICA (Feb. 3-10)
AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (Feb. 3-23)
VIETNAM (February 8-25)
MEXICO (March 10-18)
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ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-19)
WEST PRUSSIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE (June 25 - July 5)

ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (June 28 - July 10)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 5-20)
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Table groups practice for Charlotte 2005

Constituency Leaders Council members want more time to build relationships.

At their semiannual meeting, held March 7-9 in Donaldson, Ind., 75 members of the Constituency Leaders Council tested a new table group process for the Charlotte 2005 Delegate Assembly. Table groups have proved effective at each CLC meeting and have been used at previous delegate assemblies in Nashville and Atlanta.

Kurt Horst of Allegheny Conference introduced the process. He noted that CLC members are asked to be table group leaders at Charlotte, along with Executive Board members and other area conference leaders. Table groups at the assembly will agree on a covenant for their work together, he said. With a limited number of hours for delegate sessions, the goal is to hear as much wisdom from church leaders as possible in the time available.

One time-saving device is to limit time at the microphone and have each table discern who should go to the mike. Horst also said that people lined up at the mike should sit down if they hear someone else say what they planned to say. CLC members did a practice run, responding to a paper by Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, on the roles of area conferences, Executive Leadership and churchwide agencies in working together to increase the effectiveness of the ministry of congregations. During the response time, however, only one person sat down before speaking.

Each CLC meeting includes a report by an agency of Mennonite Church USA. At this one, MMA vice presidents Vyron Schmidt and Karl Sommers discussed that agency's relationship to area conferences and constituency groups. While MMA relates to many Anabaptist groups, Sommers said, members of Mennonite Church USA are by far the largest group, and MMA's governance relationship is primarily with Mennonite Church USA.

CLC also served as a testing ground when members devoted the second day of this meeting to a learning community retreat led by Sherm Kauffman, Marlene Bogard and Peter Graber.

"We want to create more settings … where there's worship and time to work," said Graber.

The retreat demonstrated a new learning community model that the congregational resources network task group is recommending for future churchwide and conference work. Bogard called it "a way to be the church and to learn."

This retreat included a leadership seminar led by Keith Harder and Rick Stiffney. They focused on how we use power to empower others.

On the final morning, during an open-mike time, some CLC members said they wanted more time given to building relationships among area conferences. Others wanted to again address guidelines for those relationships.

The latter remark was sparked by a report two days earlier, when Allegheny Conference mentioned its recent decision regarding Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church (see March 15, page 6).

Sharon Waltner, moderator-elect designate of Mennonite Church USA, will become chair of CLC after the Charlotte assembly, replacing Roy Williams. CLC's gift discernment committee named Noel Santiago of Franconia Conference vice chair.

The fall meeting of CLC will be Oct. 7-9 at Excelsior Springs, Mo.—*Gordon Houser*

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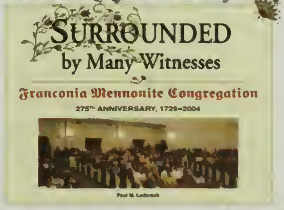
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CALENDAR

Anabaptist Reconciliation Conference, April 7-9, Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, Pa. For registration and/or information, write: Anabaptist Reconciliation, P.O. Box 2243, Lancaster PA 17608-2243; phone 717-898-6602 or visit our Web site: www.anabaptistreconciliation.org.

Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center, *Easter sunrise service*, March 27, 6:00 a.m., 711 Garbers Church Road, Harrisonburg, VA. Speaker Ron Wyrick, pastor of Harrisonburg First Church of the Brethren. In case of rain, service will be moved to Weavers Mennonite Church along Route 33.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Correction: In the Feb. 15 issue, **Tula Isabella Conklin's** date of birth was incorrectly listed. She was born Dec. 4, 2000 and received for adoption on Dec. 2, 2004 by Michael and Thelma Gochnauer Conklin, Manheim, Pa.

Alderfer, Eli Charles, Feb. 1, to Chris and Jana Hostetter Alderfer, Harleysville, Pa.

Angel, Sofia Simone, Dec. 24, 2004, to Alfredo and Gwen Snavely Angel, Seattle, Wa.

Baggett, Patrick Lyman, Dec. 22, 2004, to Jerome Baggett and Sheri Hostetler, Oakland, Calif.

Beck, Reed Christopher, Feb. 20, to Chris and Shelly Landis Beck, The Woodlands, Texas.

Booz, Dylan Robert, Feb. 23, to Michael and Kimberly Gehman Booz, Telford, Pa.

Buller, Elisabet Madrene, Jan. 18, to Jess and Andrea Brown Buller, Mead, Neb.

Diller, Allison Christine, Jan. 12, to Jason and Rachel Diller, Bluffton, Ohio.

Epp, Connor Jacob, Jan. 16, to Nathan and Sheila Peters Epp, Marion, S.D.

Hartzler, Abigail Marie, Feb. 26, to Tim and Carla Brenneman Hartzler, Marshallville, Ohio.

Heatwole, Joanna Yoder, Jan. 5, to Chad and Joanna Yoder Heatwole, Rochester, N.Y.

Folkerts, Drew Isaac, Feb. 11, to Dana and Tonya Neufeld, Annville, Ky.

Funk, Kierra Brooklyn, Jan. 16, to Jonathan and Dianna Peters Funk, Andover, Kan.

Kauffman, Lucca Kanagy, Feb. 20, to Bradley Kauffman and Renee Kanagy, Kalona, Iowa.

Knox, Hanna Grace, Feb. 11, to Jason and Tiffany Markham Knox, Rantoul, Ill.

Koerner, Jada Joy, Feb. 12, to Todd and Suzanne Brockmueller Koerner, Freeman, S.D.

Lefever, Sarah Elizabeth, Feb. 25, to Rodney and Lauri Hoober Lefever, Lancaster, Pa.

Lehman, Rachel Christine, Feb. 18, to Kent and Kim Ropp Lehman, Kalona, Iowa.

Miller, Julia Grace and Nathan Davis (twins), Feb. 5, to Eric and Jodi Burkhalter Miller, Walnut Creek, Ohio.

Moyer, Garrett Wade, Feb. 25, to Michael and Lori Moyer, Souderton, Pa.

Myers, Madison Ann, Feb. 4, to Dean and Stephanie Musselman Myers, New Holland, Pa.

Nissley, Taryn Lee, Feb. 2, to Rick and Trina Hall Nissley, Elkhart, Ind.

Peters, Trev Jamison, Feb. 16, to Jeff and Tami Goertzen Peters, Henderson, Neb.

Reed, Carson Jay, Feb. 19, to Chris and Nora Weldy Reed, Mishawaka, Ind.

Roth, Kate Marie, Feb. 25, to Lynn and Anita Nafziger Roth, Archbold, Ohio.

Tomaszewski, Aranna Elizabeth, Feb. 11, to Janos and Sherri Snyder Tomaszewski, Fleetwood, Pa.

Troudt, Emily Sue, Jan. 20, to Casey and Joni Friesen Troudt, Lawrence, Neb.

MARRIAGES

Birkey/Valleau: Joe Birkey, Rantoul, Ill., and Celeste Valleau, Mahomet, Ill, Feb. 14 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Gilbert/Tyson: Randi Gilbert, Inman, Kan., and J.C. Tyson, Colorado Springs, Colo., Jan. 2.

Rose/Shima: Richard Rose, Denver, Colo., and Deborah Shima, Rocky Ford, Colo., Feb. 19 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

DEATHS

Correction: Lehman, LaVoid H., 89, Topeka, Ind., died Jan. 13. Spouse: Betty Rice Lehman. Parents: Harry and Mae Bobeck Lehman. Children: Greg, Dexter; stepchildren Gary Wiley, Marlene Gohl; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 17 at Topeka Mennonite Church.

Bender, Nora Troyer, 99, Goshen, Ind., died March 3. Spouse: Ernest R. Bender (deceased). Parents: J.S. and Ada Yoder Troyer. Child: Francis (Mary Catherine); three grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Detrick, Lucille Maust, 86, Springs, Pa., died Feb. 27. Spouse: Harley Detrick (deceased). Parents: Simon J. and Elizabeth Otto Maust. Children: Roger, Kenneth, Barbara Brown, Harriet Berg; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 6 at Springs Mennonite Church.

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Dick, Arlene, 87, Mt. Lake, Minn., died Feb. 11. Spouse: Jacob A. Dick. Parents: Cornelius and Katherine Rempel Peters. Children: Mary Harder, Norman, Marlin; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake.

Ebersole, Retha Lehman, 91, Chicago, Ill., died Feb. 1. Spouse: Roy H. Ebersole, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Henry S. and Viola M. Long Lehman. Children: Suellen Chavin, Verna Kauffman, Roy Jr.; stepchildren: Miriam Shank, Gertrude Cambell, Anita Oberg, Belva Robinson, Betty Sutter, Everett, Charles, Robert, Eugene, Willard; eight grandchildren; 53 step-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling, Ill.

Fretz, Margaret Smith, 102, Sellersville, Pa., died Feb. 28. Spouse: Osmund Fretz (deceased). Parents: William and Tillie Landes Smith. Children: Peg Morrow, Bill; nine grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: March 7 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Friesen, Esther Catharine, 84, Henderson, Neb., died Feb. 3. Spouse: Ruben H. Friesen (deceased). Parents: H. Albert and Catharine Andreas Claassen. Children: Donna, Mark; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Fruchey, Richard N., 60, Bluffton, Ohio, died Feb. 1. Spouse: Nancy Patterson Fruchey. Parents: Noel and Christina Stemen Fruchey. Children: Brad, Terri Baer; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Gerig, Jean, 57, West Branch, Iowa, died Feb. 9 of Lymphoma. Spouse: David Sickles. Parents: Milburn Gerig and Doris Graber. Children: Analisa Gerig Sickles, Amanda Gerig Sickles. Funeral: Feb. 12 at First Mennonite Church of Iowa City, Iowa.

Gingerich, Rhoda Yoder, 91, Rolette, N.D., died Feb. 26. Spouse: Rufus Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Mose M. and Elizabeth Coblentz Yoder. Children: Robert, Raymond, Randy; nine grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: March 1 at Lakeview Mennonite Church, Wolford, N.D.

Graves, Lew, 61, Goshen, Ind., died Jan. 5. Spouse: Mary Keim Graves. Parents: Jacob and Helen Wohlgemuth Graves. Children: Gail Gerber, Jim, Don; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 12 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Haury, Benjamin, 19, Hesston, Kan., died Feb. 21. Parents: David and Rose Wiebe Haury. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka, Kan.

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Herr, Marie Still, 87, Valatie, N.Y., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Aaron Herr (deceased). Parents: James and Vivian Staley Still. Children: Susan Herr-Hoyman, David, George D., Paul; six grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Hershberger, Donald G., 62, Springs, Pa., died Feb. 24. Spouse: Beth Ann Lewis Hershberger (deceased). Parents: George and Evelyn Spaugy Hershberger. Child: Andy. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Hochstetler, Kenneth, 61, Millersburg, Ohio, died March 1. Spouse: Lois Burky Hochstetler. Children: Chad, Jennifer Hochstetler Lukacsko. Funeral: March 5 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman, Ervin Jacob, 65, Portland, Ore., died Feb. 15. Spouse: Ruth Driver Kauffman. Parents: Karl and Elizabeth Kauffman. Children: Yoland, Sonya Kauffman Smith, Jae; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Portland Mennonite Church.

Loewen, Velma Jane, 51, Flanagan, Ill., died Jan. 10. Parents: Harry J. and Verna Schroeder Loewen. Stepmother: Mildred Rogers Loewen Quiring. Funeral: Jan. 18 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake, Minn.

Mishler, Helen Miller, 86, Lagrange, Ind., died Feb. 24. Spouse: Merrill M. Mishler (deceased). Parents: Earl and Ruby Stahl Miller. Children: Ruth Basinger, Rose Miller, Retha Filhart, John, James; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 28 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Murray, Ruby Yontz, 91, Ligonier, Ind., died Feb. 16. Spouse: Gerald E. Murray (deceased). Parents: David and Emma Yoder Yontz. Child: Jane Miller; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen, Ind.

Nafziger, Ivan, 84, Pettisville, Ohio, died Feb. 13 of pneumonia. Spouse: Lodema Wyse Nafziger. Parents: William and Ruth Frey Nafziger. Children: Dianne Yoder, Peggy Rupp, Jeanne Schrock, Richard, Kathleen Short, Edgar; 19 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Tedrow (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Oswald, Evelyn Martin, 83, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 7 of bone cancer. Spouse: Daniel Oswald (deceased). Parents: Art and Lydia Egli Oswald. Children: Tom, Art, Betty Good, Debbie Hartzler; 15 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 12 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts, Ind.

Pankratz, Martha, 82, Mt. Lake, Minn., died Jan. 30. Spouse: Henry H. Pankratz (deceased). Parents: Isaac John and Marie Goertzen Adrian. Children: Roslyn Jenkins, LaVerne, Dale; 12 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 3 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake.

Quiring, Irvin, 86, Mt. Lake, Minn., died Jan. 30. Spouse: Lorraine Quiring. Parents: John J. and Justina Goossen Quiring. Children: Barbara Jacques, Sharlene; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 2 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake.

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Rheinheimer, Rollin, 73, Jonestown, Pa., died Feb. 8. Spouse: Betty Stutzman Rheinheimer. Parents: Edward and Laura Reinhardt Rheinheimer. Children: Kristine Yelk, Richard, Ronald; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Sawadsky, Anna Berg, 102, Vineland, Ont., died Feb. 16 of pneumonia. Spouse: Herman Sawadsky (deceased). Parents: John and Helene Berg. Children: Hedy M., Helen E. Pauls, Lilly A. Zacharias, Harold H., Johnny (deceased); eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Feb. 21 at Vineland United Mennonite Church.

Schrag, Joleen Krehbiel, 65, Topeka, Kan., died Feb. 13 of multiple sclerosis. Spouse: Joe Schrag. Children: Monica, Myles; one grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 18 at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka.

Schrock, Lydia Zook, 100, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Lawrence A. Schrock (deceased). Parents: Levi and Nettie Yoder Zook. Children: James, Richard, David; 10 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Shank, Luke J., 80, Lititz, Pa., died Dec. 11, 2004, of cancer. Spouse: Anna Elizabeth Metzler Shank (deceased). Parents: Harvey E. and Anna Martin Shank. Children: Duane, Calliope (Dottie), Debbie Shank Miller, Dan; six grandchildren. Memorial service: Dec. 14, 2004, at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Smith, C.S. James, 63, Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 26 as a result of an automobile accident. Spouse: Donna Nafziger Smith. Parents: Walter and Roberta Graham Smith. Children: Eric, Christina Hammack, Kimberly; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 3 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Stoudt, Jacob N., 101, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 21 of cardiac failure. Spouse: Mary Ellen Alderfer Stoudt (deceased). Parents: Henry and Magdalena Nice Stoudt. Children: Curtis A., Merrill A.; five grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; eight great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 25 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Unrau, D. Clarence, 93, North Newton, Kan., died Feb. 11. Spouse: Frieda Rempel Unrau (deceased). Parents: Henry and Elisabeth Schroeder Unrau. Children: Bette Morin, Robert; 11 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 17 at Lorraine Ave. Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan.

Unrau, Walter D., 87, Bluffton, Ohio, died Jan. 8. Spouse: Ruth Unrau. Parents: Peter Voth and Helen Schmidt Unrau. Children: Susan Stucky, Paula. Funeral: Jan. 14 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Wenger, Martha Driver, 92, Waynesboro, Va., died Jan. 21. Spouse: Paul L. Wenger (deceased). Parents: Joseph R. and Elizabeth Weaver Driver. Children: Paul L., Robert D., David W., Ann E., Carol E. Wenger-Kirk; 10 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 29 at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro.

Yoder, Ruth Eash, 90, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 16 of pneumonia. Spouse: Alva Yoder (deceased). Parents: Sem K. and Susie Blough Eash. Children: Avon Good, Bradley, Wayne, Keith; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 19 at Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Zuercher, Verna Irene, 82, Wooster, Ohio, died Feb. 2. Parents: Edwin and Anna Gerber Zuercher. Child: Joe; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Wooster Mennonite Church.

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Warwick River Christian School, Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 through grade eight, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire this summer. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Road., Newport News, VA 23602, or LJShowalter@aol.com.

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Salford Mennonite child-care centers, a mission of Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa., seeks a ***director*** for The Children's Center at Dock Woods, one of its two Pennsylvania licensed child-care centers.

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***HPER & women's basketball coach*: Bluffton University** is accepting applications for a faculty position in HPER and women's basketball coach beginning fall 2005. Master's degree required, previous collegiate coaching experience in basketball required. Successful record of student-athlete recruitment and knowledge of NCAA Division III rules. Physical education and recreation generalist who can teach in several areas of the field. Ph.D. required for consideration of tenure. Bluffton University is affiliated with NCAA Division III and the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference. Responsibilities include teaching courses in physical education and recreation commensurate with teaching experience. Coaching duties include administering all aspects of a successful collegiate women's basketball program, including game and practice coaching, recruiting, scheduling, budget management and public relations. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Consideration of applications begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made.

For information see www.bluffton.edu. Send letter of interest, résumé or vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Administrative Assistant for Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. EOE. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

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Franconia Mennonite Church, located in Franconia, Pa., is seeking a talented, energetic individual to fill the position of ***music director*** and lead a congregation of over 700 members in our music ministry. This very important role will give leadership to all music areas within the church, including adult and children's choirs, music planning for worship services and congregational singing. For more information or to request a detailed job description, please call Keith Berger at 215-723-3220. Résumés can be sent to kberger@franconiamennonite.org.

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For information see www.bluffton.edu/about/employment. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from the referee) and official transcripts to Susan Collier, Administrative Assistant for the Pathways Project, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of **director of marketing services**. Responsibilities include preparing an annual marketing communication plan, crisis management, news dissemination, departmental budget, scheduling of work, assurance of quality control, monthly workflow planning, long-range planning and staff supervision. Bachelor's degree in marketing, communication or equivalent experience required. At least five years in one or more of the following fields is required: mass-media communications, marketing, publishing, graphic design, public relations, related areas. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, résumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, fax 540-432-4600, email hr@emu.edu. The search committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. The search will continue until the position is filled.

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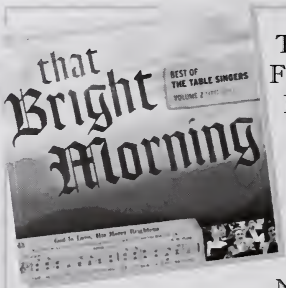
Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the position of ***math instructor***. Send résumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School,1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.



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In the Fire of the Burning Bush: An Initiation to the Spiritual Life by Marko Ivan Rupnik (Eerdmans, 2004, $15) offers an appraisal of Christian faith that draws in reflections on spirituality by ancient and patristic writers from both East and West. Rupnik moves beyond false oppositions—such as body-soul dualism or the reduction of "spiritual" to the "psychological"—to a perspective that integrates all dimensions of life.

Shaming the Devil: Essays in Truthtelling by Alan Jacobs (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) explores how hard it is to tell the truth about the world of culture—and how central that task is to the Christian life. Jacobs contemplates the work of people he takes to be exemplary truth seekers: Rebecca West, W.H. Auden, Albert Camus, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Iris Murcoch, Wole Soyinka, Philip Pullman and Anne Carson.

Proverbs: Believers Church Bible Commentary Series by John W. Miller (Herald Press, 2005, $24.99) uncovers evidence for two editions of Proverbs, clarifying puzzling features of the book's design, purpose and message and enhancing the book's relevance for its time and ours.

Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice by John D. Roth (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) gives a brief account of what Mennonites believe, from the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement to biblical interpretation, baptism, understandings of the church, ethics and the complex question of denominationalism. Roth provides a framework for ongoing conversations about faithful discipleship in the Mennonite church today.

Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible, edited by Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker, Marleen Kool and Daniel Schipani (Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2005, $25), documents an unprecedented three-year research study centered on the story of the encounter of Jesus with a Samaritan woman. The study involved a partnership of committed and creative ordinary readers, expert teachers and other pastoral leaders, and Bible and theology scholars, representing many countries in five continents. The book invites further reflection, dialogue and collaboration.

Credo by William Sloane Coffin (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, $12.95) gives a record of the public life of the man who was a Christian voice in the civil rights movement and the opposition to the Vietnam War. This book offers his words on issues ranging from charity and justice to politics and the meaning of faith.

The Gospel According to America: A Meditation on a God-blessed, Christ-haunted Idea by David Dark (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, $14.95) uses icons from music, literature, film, the media and politics to provide fodder for a conversation about what it means to be Christian and American in this "weird moment" in which we live.

Morning Song by Joanne Lehman (Kent State University Press, 2005, $6) is Lehman's first collection of poems. Julia Kasdorf writes that "these poems speak simply, and their mourning, memory and healing are a balm for times when a little bit of quiet would do us all a world of good." One of the poems appeared in *The Mennonite*.

The Evangelical Moment: The Promise of an American Religion by Kenneth J. Collins (Baker Academic, 2005, $22.99) offers a substantial look at American evangelicalism that celebrates the vitality of the movement today, especially in terms of its contributions both to the church and to the broader American society.

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The search for well-born children

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Health-care Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu.

The joy was almost overwhelming when Judy and Dave called to say Judy was pregnant. As is increasingly common, they married later in life: Dave was near 40 and Judy 34. Less than two years later, Judy was pregnant, and their enthusiasm was contagious.

In the pregnancy's fourth month, doctors and nurses approached this devout Catholic couple on four occasions to encourage them to do genetic testing through amniocentesis. On each occasion they declined the offer, saying they viewed all children as God-given gifts, no matter what genetic tests might show. Despite clearly communicating their convictions, medical staff repeatedly invited my friends to reconsider.

Amniocentesis inserts a needle into the mother's womb and extracts a small sample of amniotic fluid. From this fluid we can determine the fetus' gender and look for numerous health conditions, including Down's syndrome, Edwards disease and spina bifida. The test involves some risk of miscarriage, roughly the same risk as the likelihood they will discover a serious disorder (less than 1 percent).

Dave and Judy are uncertain why the medical staff persisted in offering this test. I believe my friends' experience is an example of our society's eugenic tendencies. Whatever the medical staff's intentions, the test's primary social function is to help women decide whether or not to terminate their pregnancies—for example, 90 percent of women who accept amniocentesis have an abortion if the test reveals Down's syndrome. This statistic suggests that our society persists in offering amniocentesis in large part because there are certain types of people we would rather not have in our midst. While there are many reasons to offer or accept amniocentesis, its primary societal role is clear: to limit or eliminate certain classes of people.

One reason we have trouble recognizing the eugenic tendencies visible in cases such as Judy and Dave's is that we do not remember our country's infatuation with the eugenics movement. "Eugenics" (from Greek, meaning "good in birth") was coined by Francis Galton in 1883 "to describe his plan to improve the human race through better breeding" (*Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* by Christine Rosen, Oxford University Press, 2004). From the end of the 19th century until World War II, eugenics advocates spanned the U.S. (and British) political and social spectrum. Some used eugenic arguments to advance nationalism, class and race discrimination, and immigration restrictions. Others saw eugenics as a way to eliminate the causes of poverty and human suffering. Since the "science" of eugenics taught that mental illness, epilepsy, "feeble-mindedness," criminal traits and poverty were inherited, the way to stop poverty and suffering was to stop such folks from having children. This effort to discourage or prevent the "unfit" from having children was termed negative eugenics. Conversely, positive eugenics sought to improve the human race by urging people with the right characteristics, such as high intelligence or social standing, to marry those with similar characteristics and to have large families.

The argument that eugenics provided a scientific way to eliminate poverty and suffering was especially persuasive among progressive Christians, social service agencies and in state legislatures. Protestant ministers, including Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and Congregational, promoted eugenics as the way to eliminate human suffering and to advance the kingdom of God by improving the race. Across the country, eugenics was preached from the pulpit and taught in Sunday school classes. YMCAs took part in the eugenics' "Keeping Fit Campaign," which included a poster touting: "Children get their basic qualities by inheritance. If they are to be strong, keen, efficient and great, there must be good blood back of them" (Amy Laura Hall, "Good Breeding: the Eugenics Temptation," in *The Christian Century*, November 2, 2004). Thousands of pastors signed pledges declaring they would not marry any couple who had not secured eugenic health certificates from their doctors.

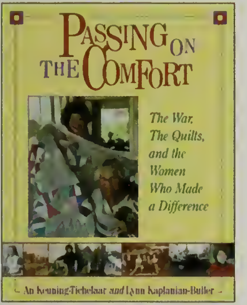
Following the same logic, many social service agencies argued that charity was cruel, enabling the perpetuation of the unfit, "defectives," delinquents and their dependents. Indeed, many social service agencies argued that the unfit should be cared for in carefully quarantined settings and prevented from reproducing. State legislatures likewise enacted laws enabling the forced sterilization of people on public assistance and in homes for the mentally ill or in prison. By 1940, at least 35,000 people from across the country had been sterilized or castrated against their will.

An overt eugenics movement was eventually discredited by several forces: better scientific understandings of the role of heredity and environment, persistent Catholic opposition to the movement and a recognition of atrocities done by the Nazis in the name of eugenics. While few in our society overtly endorsed eugenics, knowing our earlier infatuation with the movement may help us identify those same tendencies today. TM

PASSING ON THE COMFORT

The War, the Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference

The book —



PASSING ON THE COMFORT

The War, The Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference

– An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller –

Two women find each other in Holland, brought together improbably by a set of worn quilts, made by groups of women half-a-world-away who simply used what they had.

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Gordon Houser

Stories within the Story

Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?—Luke 24:32

Each of our lives is a story, and that story is made up of stories that shape who we are. When we choose to follow Christ, we join a community of such followers who are part of the larger Story that God is creating in Christ.

That ongoing Story includes the good news that God reigns, as Jesus proclaimed (Mark 1:14-15). To believe that good news, we all have to "repent," change the way we were going in order to follow the Way of the Lord.

How we come to believe the good news, and how we follow that Way is unique to each of us. As we learn from Scripture and from our forebears in the faith and as we share our stories with one another, we become more like the Christ we follow.

God meets us in our particular situation, in our stories. In the Gospel reading for April 10 (Luke 24), we read the particular story of Cleopas and another disciple on that particular road to Emmaus on that particular day when they met the risen Jesus but did not recognize him. In their story, passed on to us, we encounter Jesus telling them "the things about himself in all the scriptures" (v. 27), how he fit into God's Story. And with them, our hearts also burn with joy to be part of that story.

The Bible is largely made up of stories of people who encounter God and respond in positive and often negative ways. Although many people think of the Bible as a rule book, it is a narrative that invites us to join its story and encounter the Author.

When we listen to one another without trying to put people in convenient categories, we exercise a love that brings healing and hope.

Even those parts we think of as rules, such as the Ten Commandments (called "words," Exodus 20:1), are part of the story of God's people. As we learn about God liberating Israel from Egypt, we can experience liberation from our sinful habits and work to help bring liberation to others.

Mennonite Church USA's vision is that we "become communities of healing and hope." One significant way I have experienced healing is when I have shared a story from my experience and had loving brothers and sisters listen to me without judgment. Such unconditional love has brought me great freedom and allowed me in turn to listen to others' stories.

As a writer I enjoy hearing people's stories. When I'm in a restaurant and the waiter or waitress asks me if I'd like anything else, I'm tempted to say, "Yes, tell me your story." Each person's life is unique and interesting.

Curiosity helps us welcome others. Whether we encounter them in a blues bar (page 14) or in our own families (page 8), we can listen to them and perhaps introduce them to the good news of God's Story.

People working in conflict resolution have taught us the importance of listening to people's stories. When we listen to one another without trying to put people in convenient categories, we exercise a love that brings healing and hope.

Even the Anabaptist "rule of Christ" (Matthew 18:15-20) is less about rules than about listening to each other in order to figure out who was wronged so that forgiveness and restoration can happen.

When we enter another's story, we enter another world. We free ourselves of our egos, a prerequisite to loving another. This helps us understand another's perspective. When we can do this with curiosity rather than judgment, we can learn much about our world and ourselves.

This is especially important as we try to interpret the larger Story we have joined ourselves to. A helpful book about that process is *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2005), which documents an unprecedented three-year study centered on the story of the encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4). Christian groups from various cultures around the world learned from one another how they interacted with this story. This process led to a deeper faith and understanding.

As we listen to one another's stories and grow in understanding the larger Story, our hearts will burn and our lives will change.—*gh*

The Mennonite

www.TheMennonite.org

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God's double agents

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For whom do we fight?

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

Last July, a courageous man who served the United States in a modern war questioned whether I was actually a "born-again Christian." How could I be born again and be committed to nonviolence, nonresistance and conscientious objector commitments? He was not courageous enough to raise this question to my face; he told my wife these things.

When I saw him, I had enough courage to invite him to question my discipleship to my face rather than berate me to my wife. But this veteran declined the opportunity I welcomed.

He also declared his allegiance to Jesus Christ. I explained my understandings: "When a man or woman obeys Jesus Christ, every other allegiance must be disavowed or put in its secondary place to the kingdom of heaven. … Earthly weapons cannot be used by the disciple of Jesus Christ." That was all I got to say without his constant interruption, so I'll articulate part of my understanding here.

For the majority of Western Christians, separation of church and state extends only as far as tax exemptions and the free exercise of religion. Too many Western Christians are willing to take up arms in defense of their nation and its self-interests. It escapes ambivalent Christians as well as supporters of nonviolence or nonresistance that the church has a mandate that defines its purpose and supersedes nationalism and party spirit. In Europe and North America, the demands of nationhood tug at the hearts of Christians, sending them into a tailspin of hatred, self-indulgence and war.

Anabaptists also are more nationalistic than in previous times. Anabaptists in the West are divided about nonviolence and nonresistance, while other Christian traditions are turning away from the harlot of Christendom and finding assistance in the older Anabaptist writings.

Ambivalent Christians who love the world may be ignorant of the impact of their betrayal of Jesus now, but not for long. For a follower of Jesus Christ to embrace violence against other people would be like a U.S. naval officer switching sides in the middle of a military conflict. Jesus' followers live for the salvation of the souls in every tribe, tongue and nation. Their privilege is to die for their enemies, not assist in annihilating those enemies.

The debate on nonviolence and nonresistance is of less significance if the church somehow misunderstands itself as representing altruisms disconnected from the mandate of heaven. What is peace without the Messiah? What is justice without the cross? Where is mercy in a world where brewing hatred and self-interests constantly collide?

I turn my American veteran antagonist's question upside down: How can one claim to be born again if after the birth one is just as committed to violence as before? All the rationale for warfare and violence are children of carnal reasoning.

The church represents a different purpose, one given by the kingdom of heaven. It does not include the use of weapons and the representation of the kingdoms of this world in warfare.

If we fight for the safety and self-interests of our nation, how can we be followers of Jesus? How can we fulfill our purpose from heaven if we fight for temporal things?

To be part of the body of Jesus Christ is to enter into warfare. If Anabaptists are part of Jesus' body, they must fight, but not with carnal weapons. Are we like soldiers who have surrendered in war. As Ernest Gordon mused in the movie *To End all Wars*: "When you surrender in war, you're stripped of your dignity as a soldier. All you've got left is your fellow comrades. … What does it take for a man to lose his dignity? How far can he fall to pay the price of survival? … War is the final destination of hatred."

In the kingdom of heaven, traitors are not executed. Mercy awaits them. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Damascus Road

Re Everett J. Thomas' editorial ("A Decade on Damascus Road," Feb. 15): Our problem stems from the idea that Mennonites of color have somehow not had the courage to speak up before: in one sweeping comment, the history of people of color was erased and with it the history of resistance and adaptation by Mennonites of color. We are not just now gaining the courage to speak up. We have spoken up throughout: sometimes in silence, absence, literature, shouts and in our worship. Our communities have wanted to be a part of the Mennonite church. When we protested, we stressed collaboration and partnership. When we voiced our discontent, we did so because we believed in the ideals of peace, justice and community.

It is important that the Mennonite church view the work of Damascus Road as part of the larger commitment to peace and justice which is so much a part of our church. Singling out this work neglects its intersections with peacemaking and justice within our church.

It is easy in this work for white people to dismantle racism in paternalistic ways. By stating that we have not spoken up before implies that we have only been passive victims of societal or Mennonite racism. That is simply inaccurate. Our communities have proven to be resilient in their response to oppression both within and without the church. To assume that a program, originally developed from within Mennonite Central Committee (Damascus Road), gave voice to people of color is a dangerous assumption because it once again places white people as the sole agents of history.*—Felipe Hinojosa, Michelle E. Armster, Regina Shands Stoltzfus*

IN THIS ISSUE

No, this is not a spy issue. Instead we focus on stewardship and remind our readers that May 1 is Stewardship Sunday in Mennonite Church USA. Wally Kroeker's article (page 8) points us to the importance of connecting our worship life on Sunday with our work life on Monday. "All work is service to God," he writes. In a second article (page 12), this one commissioned by Meetinghouse, a consortium of Mennonite editors, Wally considers a change of thinking about how to use our wealth. Rather than giving away excess money to help the poor, some argue that that money should be invested to generate economic opportunity. Jenny Forner (page 14) offers practical help to churches trying to help people in need. MMA president Howard Brenneman (page 18) echoes the idea of double agents by calling us to combine the best of business and the best of church. Bruce Martin contacted us just after the tragic shooting at Red Lake High School in Minnesota and sent us his reflections (page 16). Let's serve all God's children with all our resources, Sunday, Monday and every day.*—Editors*

Re the letter from Ross L. Bender (Readers Say, March 15): Damascus Road is under no illusion that it can "change the church ... with a few workshops." That change will come only by the power of God. In my experience as an antiracism trainer, team leader and organizer, I have seen transformation in the lives of individuals and in the church as together we struggle toward becoming authentically antiracist in urban, suburban and rural settings. More money and evangelistic efforts in the cities would be great but only if the white part of the church's constituency daily chooses to lay down its need to control everything. Otherwise we continue to make hurtful mistakes in our well-intended efforts.

Damascus Road does work primarily with people who are already committed to Christ and the church. But I have also witnessed powerful and gradual conversions of people who decided to follow Christ, some of whom made a choice between Christianity and another religion. In this ministry, transformation happens for Christians of all ages, ethnic backgrounds and walks of life. We have come to know that salvation through Jesus and the vision of his body—as a beautiful, multicultural, antiracist, beloved community—is a hope worth holding on to and working for. So come, join us on the Damascus Road and learn what it's really about. You may find it to be a better idea than you thought.*—Sharon K. Williams, Norristown, Pa.*

Article misconstrued facts

Thank you for the interesting article by Laurie L. Oswald on the Israeli security fence/wall ("Walls Broken Down," March 15). Although there are plenty of good arguments against the barrier constructed by Israel, discussions are aided by facts. Some of the facts are misconstrued in this article.

First, the article keeps referring to the security "wall," conjuring up images of the Berlin Wall. In fact, the concrete slabs referred to in the article will make up only 6 percent of the finished barrier. The rest will be chain link fence and barbed wire as found along parts of the U.S. border with Mexico. Even Amnesty International—no friend of Israel—refers to the barrier as a fence/wall.

Second, the article notes that seminar leader Patty Shelly was pained to see the Israelis trying to create "peace" with a "security wall." I suspect few if any Israelis are deluded into thinking the barrier will bring peace. Rather, the obvious and stated purpose of the barrier is simply to prevent terrorist attacks. In this it has been quite effective. Lasting peace is a much harder prospect. Also, by the author or seminar leader blaming the "Israelis" instead of the "Israeli government" for the barrier, the author unintentionally (let's hope) tries to assign blame to every Israeli citizen. Peace requires changed hearts—and attention to nuance.—*Tim Baker, Bellingham, Wash.*

True translation not possible

Greg Thompson suggests (Readers Say, March 1) that if you remove the italicized words added to the King James Bible for the sake of smoother reading, you'll get "a more practical, sensible and acceptable" Scripture. In case you have not yet tried this out, here are a couple of samples with the KJV italics removed: "As it is written, He that much had nothing over; and he that little had no lack" (2 Corinthians 8:15) or, "And the Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, from the Lord'" (Hosea 1:2).

I can't see the improvement. There is indeed a difference between translation and interpretation, but there is no translation without interpretation. King James' translators knew this well, and if modern translators have abandoned this use of italics it only serves as a reminder that a truly word-for-word translation is impossible if you want to convey the actual sense of the text.—*David Rensberger, Decatur, Ga.*

Jesus was suffering servant

With reference to a "Resources" listing in the March 1 edition of *The Mennonite*: The book "Secrets of the Jewish Exile: The Bible's Codes, Messiah and Suffering Servant" purports to portray Isaiah's suffering servant as Ezekiel. Is it possible that the authors have never read the story of Philip and the Ethiopian, who was reading from Isaiah 53? The Acts 8 passage says, "Philip began with that very passage and told him the good news about Jesus." It's best that the authors' secrets be kept secret.—*James R. Hess, Lancaster, Pa.*

Disregarding Scriptures

Re "Women in the Pulpit" (Jan. 18): Although, according to the article, many Mennonite congregations allow women to hold positions of authority in the church, it does not give any reference to verses in Scripture supporting these women's authority. In the article, Lynn Jost of the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches states that the trends are changing and that there is "a comfort level with the status quo." This worries me because the church is not about trends but about the Word of God.

How can this be a nonissue, as Jost suggests? The biblical texts that "seem to limit women" do not imply that there is any question about women in the pulpit. 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 state clearly that women are not to be in leadership roles over men in the church—no matter what the present trends are. Though I believe women have many amazing skills and strengths I do not believe that these are any reasons to disregard what Scripture plainly says.—*Andrew J. Nordquist, Glenwood, N.M.*

Fear of feeling

Re the "name withheld" letter (Readers Say, March 15) addressing the Martha Ann Burgard article of Jan 18: Shame on *The Mennonite* for publishing that letter. A "leader" cannot attach his or her name to the letter, but who is writing to whom? To Martha? No. To his or her congregation to explain what has transpired? No. To the general readership of *The Mennonite* magazine? It seems so. And to what end? To gain public support of his or her position. The letter states that very idea: "If the readers of this column would know Martha and me personally, I sincerely believe we would have the readers' wholehearted goodwill and support," which is also to say that, "If you knew Martha and me, you'd be on my side." Utter shame on this spiritual "leader."

The writer also states that he or she is trying to continue to "cultivate a friendship with Martha." There is a saying for "friends" such as these: With friends like you, enemies are not needed.—*John Myers, Spokane, Wash.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Stewardship Sunday is May 1. Out of total household income, each year I/we give

○ Less than 5 percent (9%)

○ Five to 10 percent (42%)

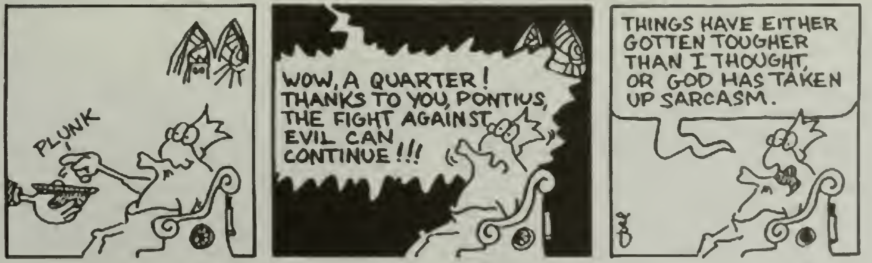
○ More than 10 percent (44%)

○ Not sure (2%)

○ It depends (2%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


PLUNK
WOW, A QUARTER! THANKS TO YOU, PONTIUS, THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL CAN CONTINUE!!!
THINGS HAVE EITHER GOTTEN TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT, OR GOD HAS TAKEN UP SARCASM.

IN BRIEF

King named EMU athletic director

David A. King will become the athletic director at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., effective July 1. King will succeed Greg S. Steffen, who is interim athletic director following the resignation last October of Larry R. Martin. King will return to his alma mater from Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, where he has been athletic director and principal of its middle school program.*—Eastern Mennonite University*

U.S. churches that are growing

Three of the largest 25 churches in the United States are Pentecostal, and six are African American, according to *The 2005 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. The list includes the rapidly growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Orthodox Church in America, Jehovah's Witnesses, and—largest of all—the Roman Catholic Church. The second largest church is the Southern Baptist Convention, followed by the United Methodist Church. *—National Council of Churches*

Mennonite Church Canada ends year 'in black'

WINNIPEG—Despite a donation shortfall of nearly $120,000 (Cdn.), Mennonite Church Canada "will have a small positive balance for the fiscal year just ended," reports Dan Nighswander, the denomination's general secretary.

The positive financial news came about because of several factors. "Every department came in under budget," Nighswander says, and exchange rates—especially in relation to the U.S. dollar—"improved in our favor." Also, some ministry activities planned for the 2004-05 fiscal year that ended Jan. 31 were deferred, and some staff vacancies were not filled immediately.

The shortfall will affect some of Mennonite Church Canada's core programs in the 2005-06 fiscal year, Nighswander says. "A number of international missions have far greater needs, and people willing to serve and respond to calls, but we have no money to send them."*—Canadian Mennonite*

Joy at job well done for Mennonite Church of Congo

Mennonites celebrate after working together. Eight members of Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and seven others spent about two weeks in January in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they worked with 15-20 Congolese in building the Welcome Center for the Mennonite Church of Congo. While in the Congo, the American team was able to attend worship services at the Mennonite Church in Kinshasa and also at Dibumba in the Tshikapa area, the location of the Mennonite Church administrative center.*—Tim Ashley*

CPT to monitor right-wing groups in Arizona

ARIZONA/SONORA—Christian Peacemaker Teams launched a six-month project April 1 to engage issues of violence directed at migrants in the southern Arizona border-town of Douglas for the second summer in a row.

Arizona sees the highest number of migrant crossings than any other area of the United States; over half of last year's U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions of migrants occurred in the Tucson sector. Failed U.S. border policies deliberately channel migrants into the most inhospitable and dangerous sectors of the southern desert, resulting in hundreds of deaths every summer.

Local residents expect April to be particularly tense. A right-wing movement calling itself the Minutemen claims to be bringing hundreds of anti-immigrant activists to do "civilian border patrols." The Minutemen militia, while maintaining their activities will be nonviolent, are expected to be heavily armed and have ties to white supremacist groups. U.S. officials and the Border Patrol have publicly described the Minutemen's planned activities as unhelpful.

In April CPT will help facilitate nonviolence trainings for volunteers collaborating with legal-observer projects monitoring the Minutemen, an initiative set up by the Arizona Civil Liberties Union and the American Friends Service Committee. *—CPT*

Jodi Beyeler

Science and religion meet in Goshen

Robert Russell (right), founder and director of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, presented three lectures and led seminar discussions during the fifth annual Goshen (Ind.) College Conference on Religion and Science March 18-20, organized by professor of physics Carl Helrich (left). Russell said the relationship between science and religion isn't about proving or disproving the other but is at its best a "mutually creative interaction" where each stream recognizes the other.*—Goshen College*

Mission worker Grace Schwartzentruber dies

WINNIPEG—Grace (Bender) Schwartzentruber of New Hamburg, Ont., Mennonite mission worker in Brazil for 32 years and a member of Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., died March 9 at age 74.

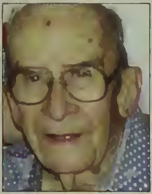
Schwartzentruber

She was fluent in Pennsylvania Dutch, Portuguese and English and worked behind the scenes with her husband, Kenneth, who operated a bookstore in Brazil for many years. She served with Mennonite Board of Missions, the predecessor (in Canada) to Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Schwartzentruber was active in Mennonite congregations in Valinhos, Campinas and Taguatinga—teaching, worship leading, preaching, playing organ, leading women's groups and organizing singing groups. She is survived by Kenneth, three daughters, one son, numerous grandchildren and siblings.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Longtime Ohio pastor dies at age 95

STRYKER, Ohio—Walter Stuckey, a longtime pastor in northwest Ohio, died March 10 at the age of 95.



Walter Stuckey

His funeral was held during the Sunday morning worship time, March 13, at Lockport Mennonite Church in rural Stryker. Stuckey participated in nearly 5,000 worship services and conducted more than 650 funerals and 300 weddings.

Born Dec. 7, 1909, Stuckey grew up in the Central Amish-Mennonite Church. He was chosen by lot to become pastor and ordained that same day, Nov. 6, 1938. He was ordained as a bishop in 1951 and later served as an overseer for Ohio Conference churches. He served on the Ohio mission board and helped plant new churches in Cleveland and southeast Ohio.

Walter and Virgie Amstutz were married Sept. 5, 1934, and celebrated their 70th anniversary last year. She survives, along with two children, four grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and siblings Earl, Anna Aeschliman, Ivan, Arthur and Clara Frey.—*Susan Balzer*

Kings, Judges and Bible quizzers

Maple Grove I quizzer Rachel Lusby concentrates on a question. Rachel's teammate Scott Umble looks on. Seventy-eight Bible quiz teams from five areas—Northwest Ohio; Wayne County, Ohio; West Liberty, Ohio; Atlantic Coast Conference in Pennsylvania and Harrisonburg, Va.—quizzed at Lancaster (Pa.) Bible College March 19-20. The questions came from the books of Kings and Judges. Hope Community from Wayne County won the tournament.—*Dale D. Gehman*

Bethel graduate wins history award

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—For the third year in a row and the fourth time in five years, a Bethel College history graduate has won the Kansas History Teachers Association Award for Best Undergraduate History Paper (Category I).

David Unruh of Wichita, a 2004 Bethel graduate, had his paper "Changing Views of Suicide in the Progressive Era" chosen as the best in the category restricted to seminar-length history research papers. Unruh wrote the paper for his senior seminar under the principle direction of his adviser, Penelope Adams Moon, assistant professor of history at Bethel.

Using obituaries from Kansas newspapers and county historical records, Unruh demonstrated how social attitudes toward suicide changed in the late 19th and early 20th century, focusing in particular on the attitudes of Harvey County residents. He found that social taboos against suicide lessened between 1890 and 1930, as economic and religious changes as well as new fields of study such as psychology and sociology, helped give people a sense of the circumstances that might lead a person to take his or her life.

Unruh lives in Lawrence and is preparing to begin graduate study in anthropology at the University of Kansas this fall.—*Bethel College*

Hesston students do service in Mexico

HESSTON, Kan.—A group of 15 Hesston College students and two staff members participated in a week-long service adventure in Reynosa, Mexico, during spring break March 11-19. They were led by campus pastor Kevin Wilder. He said the week was a time of service, education and vacation.

The group visited the outdoor bombing memorial in Oklahoma City and worshiped at San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Church. They served at an orphanage run by Children's Haven International near Reynosa, Mexico, that depends on groups that come throughout the year for a week at a time to do construction and maintenance work.

The group visited the "colonias," and they saw a way of life many had never seen before. "The poverty is so great and the need even greater," says Andrea Slater from Esmond, N.D. They participated in ministry with singing and testimony, then handed out food and clothing.—*Hesston College*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Bishop earns doctoral degree

English instructor J. Eric Bishop of Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, Lansdale, Pa., received his doctoral degree March 10 in curriculum and instruction from Kent (Ohio) State University. His dissertation, "The Quiet in the Land: Core-to-Core Culture Confrontation in a Democratic English Classroom," focused on the transition students experience from the high school into the university English classroom, specifically focusing on worldview transformation and engagement with the curriculum and instruction of classrooms that purport to be democratic. —*Christopher Dock*

Agreement ends Taco Bell boycott

Churches that endorsed a boycott against Taco Bell have declared victory after the fast-food giant agreed to increase payments to migrant tomato pickers in Florida. Taco Bell agreed to a penny-per-pound increase in wages. The agreement, announced March 8, between Yum Brands and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers ends the boycott. —*Religion News Service*

Sunday we're in church. Monday we're at work. Is there any connection?

God's double agents

by Wally Kroeker

Many people reading this article will spend 80,000 hours at a job. For some it will be drudgery; for others, a calling—a place to exercise gifts and skills.

In an average week many people spend more time with their co-workers than with their spouse. The workplace may be their primary community. To some extent they will be defined by their work ("What do you do?").

Unfortunately, it is a part of life the church often neglects.

God's week has seven days: We have been taught that God worked six days, then took one day off. God gets Sunday, and the rest are ours—five for our jobs and one for yard work.

Some of us have also picked up a sense that people who are truly committed to the Lord go into "full-time Christian service," while those with regular jobs are second-class citizens whose role is to "pay, pray and obey."

If you happen to be a layperson who is serious about faith, chances are the church will enlist you to teach Sunday school, serve on a committee or lead worship. "Ministry" happens within the bounds of the congregation or denomination (the "church gathered," as R. Paul Stevens from Regent College terms it). Little attention is invested in the "church dispersed." Rarely is daily work recognized as ministry.

Rare, too, is the teaching that all work is service to God. As the Reformer William Tyndale said, "There is no work better than another to please God; to pour water, to wash dishes, to be a cobbler or an apostle." Wherever we work, God is there, wanting us to "press the kingdom" into our daily tasks and relationships.

Deep down, though, we all know that God wants people in regular jobs. If we all became paid ministers there wouldn't be room for us.

Wherever we work, God is there, wanting us to "press the kingdom" into our daily tasks and relationships.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Peter Wagner, a leading evangelism promoter, contends that only about 10 percent of Christians actually have the gift of evangelism. What, then, are the other 90 percent to do? Are we just worker bees who toil at daily jobs so we can donate to the support of the 10 percent who have the gift of evangelism?

Clearly we are all called to bear witness to the transforming gospel. But that doesn't mean just evangelism. As in real estate, we're all called to show the property, even if not everyone can close the sale.

God has something in mind for the rest of us. God wants us to be emissaries in the daily workplace. God's week has seven days, not just one.

God goes to work: The first page of the Bible shows God busy at work. Only on page two are people introduced, and then "in the image of God." Creativity, innovation and work all express something of the character of God. God is also a sustainer who makes continued life possible (often through the jobs of people like you and me).

Christians in the workplace are like God's double agents. They have a foot in the church and a foot in the world.

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In Exodus 35:30-35 (NIV) we meet Bezalel and Oholiab, whom God filled "with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship." Their tribe is further endowed with skills as "embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers —all of them master craftsmen and designers."

Anyone who is a carpenter, house framer, bricklayer, metalworker or textile worker can see themselves in that passage of Scripture.

In the Gospels we find a lot of working folk—in fact, most of the action revolves around laboring people such as fishers, tentmakers, pruners and merchants. The clergy is notably absent, except as villains.

The apostle Paul extols the diversity of the Holy Spirit's working class: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, NIV).

Whether we work on an assembly line or in an office, we are called to represent God. That is our outpost of mission. Christians in the workplace are like God's double agents. They have a foot in the church and a foot in the world. That is where we represent God's creative genius and the Christian virtues we carry with us.

Too often secular work is seen as little more than another place to proselytize, as if there is no intrinsic value in the work itself. But that is where we do the work of God by providing the goods and services people need. That is where we become God's junior partners in the ongoing work of sustaining creation.

Some clergy resist this because they fear that "workplace ministry" will distract members from congregational participation. William Diehl, author of *The Monday Connection*, found this not to be the case in his denomination. An extensive survey showed that members who saw their daily work as Christian service tended also to be stronger financial contributors and participants in other congregational activities.

Questions to ask: Being God's co-creators raises some interesting questions the church can help us examine:

What public good will my work accomplish today? Is my work an important part of God's economy? Is the world a better place because of the work I do?

Does my work contribute to the kind of world God intended, where deserts become fertile fields, where parched lands become glad, where waste spaces are comforted, as the Old Testament prophets say? Does the work we do enhance life rather than harm it?

Where do we find brokenness in the workplace? How can we deal redemptively with failure, whether that be a bankruptcy or a failed employee?

The church can breathe new life into daily work—even into whole careers—by helping members reclaim the work week for God.

Imagine a business owner seeing the company not as merely a means of profit but as a calling to provide meaningful jobs to bolster a community's economic base. Imagine a garbage collector seeing the job as making the world a cleaner place. Imagine a hospital orderly believing that cleaning soiled linens and bed pans is a vital part of God's healing process.

How the church can help: The church expands God's reach when it validates, affirms and celebrates the Monday-to-Friday activities of its members.

Pastors can visit members at lunch or coffee break. That sends a signal that this part of life is important to the church leadership. Pastors, meanwhile, gain insights (and some great sermon illustrations) into the habitat where members spend the bulk of their waking hours.

How about planning a series of short "workplace testimonies" where selected members explain "How I connect Sunday and Monday." It will be illuminating for the congregation, as well as a great opportunity for the selected speakers to ponder how their faith impacts their work.

Many churches commission people for mission work or voluntary service. Why not do the same for Fred the firefighter or Theresa the teacher or Sally the social worker?

Plan a Sunday school elective on the theme of work. Use resources such as *Faith Dilemmas for Marketplace Christians* (Herald Press), which is designed for a 13-week quarter. You may find that the resource is secondary, that people will be delighted by the chance to talk about their work in the context of the church.

Church newsletters can carry anecdotes featuring members' jobs. A budding photographer in the church can take shots of members at work (or of where retired members used to work) and mount them on a display titled "Our dispersed church."

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Work strikes a responsive chord in worship planning (and not just for Labor Day weekend). A church in Ontario invited members to show up one Sunday in work garb. The array of uniforms was quite a sight—nurses, auto mechanics, medical technicians, a chef, even a Home Hardware clerk with a loud red jacket. When everyone stood together, it was a dramatic illustration of the diverse cultures that the congregation's influence penetrated every week.

Another option is to use "tools of the trade" for a worship display, or a showcase of goods and services put forth by members during the week.

The exit is an entrance: Even the benediction can send an important signal. Greg Pierce, a Chicago publisher and Ministry of Daily Life activist, has said that it's important to "get the dismissal rite right."

One church does it this way: "Sisters and brothers in Christ, we are NOT dismissed; we are NOT just free to go—Christ sends us. Go forth into the world in the power of the Spirit; go to help and heal in all that you do."

Another church has a sign posted over the main exit door that says "Service Entrance." But it's posted on the inside, not the outside. That way it's the last thing worshipers see as they leave the auditorium, reminding them that as they leave worship they are heading out into the world where they will spend the next week as ministers. TM

Wally Kroeker is editor of The Marketplace *magazine, published by Mennonite Economic Development Associates. This article appeared first in* Mennonite Brethren Herald.

Correction: The top left photo on page 8 of the April 5 issue is by Tom Price.

Attitudes may be shifting on whether excess money should be given away or reinvested.

The wealthy

by Wally Kroeker

The preacher thundered: "Stop worrying about your money, your gold and silver. You can't take it with you anyway, and even if you could it would only melt."

This story, possibly fictitious, makes a harsh point about money—that it is wicked and its owners are doomed.

That feeling has softened in Mennonite circles. Increasingly, money is seen as a tool for potential good (as in the recent outpouring of donations to relieve tsunami suffering).

Mennonites send their children to costly private schools and colleges. Parking lots at Mennonite churches glisten with the latest cars, SUVs and mini-vans.

Another shift has been a growing sense that "wealth redistribution" is not the only way to handle excess but that "wealth creation" is a useful way to produce economic opportunity.

Both approaches compete for the same donor dollars. People of means get plenty of attention from fund-raisers who want to help them answer the question, "How shall I then give?" Should they donate their excess to the Mennonite high school's new auditorium? To a college building fund? To a mission agency?

Or, in the case of a businessperson, "Should I reinvest it in my company to create more jobs and expand the community's economic base?"

The questions suggest that Mennonites have become more comfortable with their rising prosperity and that traditional Mennonite unease about investment may be changing.

Mennonites are no strangers to wealth. Perhaps they were predisposed to do well. Hard work, thrift and an aversion to luxury often has led to financial well-being.

For hundreds of years Mennonites have had plenty of "practical, tangible wealth" such as farmland, mills, factories and trucking firms, says Calvin Redekop, a sociologist with special interest in Mennonite economic behavior. The rise of surplus, or "intangible paper wealth," is more recent.

For generations the church monitored this steadily increasing wealth. Confessions of faith warned against conspicuous consumption. But as Mennonites eased into modernity, such pronouncements have faded.

How wealthy are Mennonites? "The predominating bulk are becoming affluent," writes Redekop in *Anabaptist/Mennonite Faith and Economics*. He points to data in the 1975 demographic study by J. Howard Kauffman and Leland Harder (*Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*), which showed the income of Mennonites to be 12 percent above the North American average. A follow-up study a dozen years later showed Mennonites holding their own with a median income of $30,000 to $40,000 compared with the U.S. population median income of $32,274.

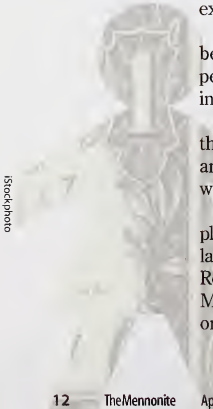
Other Kauffman and Harder data further showed that North American Mennonites were not clumped at the low-wage end of the spectrum. In the 1970s, 10 times as many were farm owners or managers, and twice as many held professional or technical occupations. Their proportion of business ownership and management was slightly higher than the general population.

Monetary vigor: There is little hard data on where Mennonites are today, but the general perception seems to be that they are gaining monetary vigor. They send their children to costly private schools and colleges. Parking lots at Mennonite churches glisten with the latest cars, SUVs and mini-vans. Churches in the citrus states bulge in winter with Mennonite "snowbirds" who can afford to travel.

Michael Yoder, a sociologist at the University of Iowa who has studied Mennonite occupations, says he suspects there are fewer Mennonites in the lower economic tier than the general North American population, though perhaps more than in the past because of the growth in urban and minority congregations.

Yoder also allows that "we may now have more wealthy persons than we used to have," though some of this increase may have been offset by the departure of some wealthy Mennonites who were made to feel uncomfortable and switched to other denominations.

Over the years Mennonites have been known for their "economic witness." Do they still have anything to teach North American culture on how to



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in the land

use discretionary wealth?

Some would contend that Mennonites are helping the Christian community develop a more mature view of wealth and investment. In 1980, Goshen (Ind.) College economist Carl Kreider's landmark book *The Christian Entrepreneur* was the first public suggestion of the role capital and entrepreneurship might play in the modern economy. The rise of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and its pioneering of microcredit illuminated for Mennonites and the larger development industry the role of productive investment as an ongoing way to combat poverty.

Wealth creation: These and other influences helped shape an emerging recognition that the poor could be helped not only by "wealth redistribution" (giving away your excess) but also by "wealth creation" (using surplus to generate new jobs and economic opportunity). The acceptance of this new view was symbolized by the 20th anniversary reissue of Ron Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, which had been a bible of wealth redistribution and now also carried a ringing endorsement of wealth creation (such as through microenterprise assistance) as a legitimate way to make a dent in poverty.

A prominent voice in this unfolding awareness has been James Halteman, a Mennonite economist who teaches at Wheaton (Ill.) College. His writings have helped focus how gospel teachings on materialism can be understood today.

Halteman points out that the ancient world understood three ways to use economic surplus: consumption in lavish living, hoarding for the future and direct charity (wealth redistribution). The modern world has an additional use for surplus: productive investment (wealth creation). Halteman says accumulating resources as productive capital is a legitimate, even desirable, act of stewardship.

"This distinction between productive and consumption wealth has not been made carefully enough in Christian circles," he says, "and the result has been that businesspersons with large productive assets have often been misunderstood and unappreciated."

An example is the "bigger barns" story in Luke 12, Halteman says. The barns are a way to guarantee the owner's future consumption, not as a vehicle for increased production that benefits others.

"The contemporary farm, factory or office building may well function, not as a store of existing resources, but rather as a vehicle for the production of future resources in greater and greater quantities."

While many Mennonites still do not allow their paper wealth to affect their lifestyle, Calvin Redekop fears others are falling prey to a kind of consumptive competition that can be seen in the parking lots of some Mennonite churches—"You buy an SUV, I'll buy a bigger one."

"Mennonite population is reflecting the economist's axiom that everyone lives at the top of their financial ability," says Redekop. "You mortgage yourself to live at the highest consumptive level you can with the resources available."

Many affluent Mennonites are too easily choosing a lifestyle "that mimicks our North American culture's wasteful and unfair taste for luxury," he says.

Perhaps the emerging view of productive investment—wealth creation for the poor—will catch the imagination of a new generation of Mennonites who can distinguish between conspicuous consumption and using wealth in a creative Anabaptist way.

Wally Kroeker wrote this article for Meetinghouse.

Baptizing the wallet as well as the man

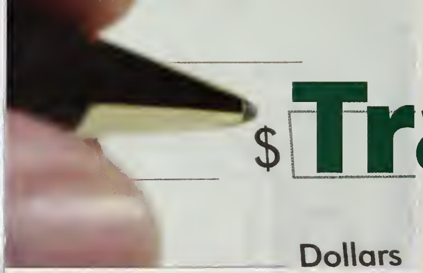
Martin Luther said Christians need three conversions—heart, mind and purse. Mennonite history contains at least one example of taking this literally. It occurred in Russia, where many Mennonites had become stupendously rich, some with estates of 100,000 acres.

One estate owner who was reputed to be covetous and unwilling to share with the poor was called to account by church leaders. As related by J.B. Toews in *Pilgrimage of Faith*, a prayer circle was organized to pray for the man's repentance.

After some months, the prayers were answered. The man publicly confessed his greed and asked God and the church for forgiveness. He asked to be rebaptized.

"My father, John A. Toews of Alexanderthal, was selected to baptize the brother for the second time," Toews recalls. "In the public prayer preceding the baptism the brother prayed for victory over the sin of covetousness. Before entering the water (for immersion baptism) he placed his wallet into his shirt pocket, for this too needed to be rebaptized. This was to symbolize the surrender of all his riches to the Lord and his service."

From that point on, Toews writes, "many blessings went out from the estate of this man, one of the wealthiest Mennonites in Russia."—*Wally Kroeker*



Transforming your Dollars

iStockphoto

by Jenny Forner

It's Monday, and the homeless shelter that has provided three months of transitional housing is putting pressure on Suzy, a single mother of three, to relocate by Friday. Who will help with a security deposit for the apartment she finally found? Agency after agency replied, "We don't provide money for security deposits."

She thought, Three months in jail for drunk driving and being separated from my children has been rough. My friends are unhappy about being stuck with the kids. They are sick of me. I'm always asking for something. I don't dare go to them again.

While at the jail, someone introduced her to Jesus, and she believed, Somehow, someway, he will provide a way for me. But how will I ever get help by Friday. If I call a church, will they help me?

She looked in the yellow pages and thought, Wow, what a lot of churches!

She called All Saints Church: "Could you help me with a security deposit?"

When a stranger bursts into our life asking for a last-minute bailout, it takes us outside our comfort and control.

"Sorry, we don't do money for security deposits."

She called First Believers Church: "Could you help me with a security deposit?"

"Sorry, we don't give money, only food and clothing."

She tried Christian Community Church: "Could you help me with a security deposit?"

"Are you a member of our church?"

"No."

"I'm sorry, we only provide financial assistance to members."

After countless phone calls and facing a wave of despair, Suzy called another church: "Will you help me?"

The response from Deeper Life Church was, "Thank you for calling our church. Are you looking for money to find a different way of living or do you just need a check?"

Startled for a moment, Suzy said, "I think I have found a different way of living, but I sure do need a check."

"We have something to offer you, Suzy. One of our church members could meet with you tonight and explain Steps to Change, a class designed to help you get a new focus on your finances and on life. Are you interested?"

Suzy didn't know what to say or what going to a meeting was going to accomplish. But she was tired, afraid and relieved to simply connect with someone. She knew she could choose not to show up, if she wanted. She sure needed $600. So she said yes. Then the church receptionist prayed for Suzy over the phone.

"We don't do money" is a painful expression both for those hearing it and those saying it.

Tightrope: Churches know they can't solve people's problems by merely writing checks but often don't know what else to do. Churches experience this struggle daily as they walk the tightrope between avoiding wasting benevolence funds and providing potential life-changing charitable assistance. Providing money for crisis assistance is typically seen through the narrow lens of paying a bill rather than the wide lens of reaching people for Christ.

How do churches get on the tightrope? It may start with, "My electricity is going to be shut-off" or, "I cannot afford Christmas gifts for my children" or, "I was homeless, have found an apartment and need a $600 security deposit."

From the first contact, it can feel like the person in need holds an urgent, emotionally loaded gun to your head. They don't give you any options. Your immediate options may seem limited and full of unwanted anxiety, awkwardness, frustration and discomfort.

Our culture tells us we deserve comfort and control. When a stranger bursts into our life asking for a last-minute bailout, it takes us outside our comfort and control. It's also frightening to think that our refusal could harm a struggling mom with three small children, and we think, Is this what Jesus would do? There is no way we can solve all her problems. How can I discern whether she is open to change? She'll be back again next month. I

Five steps to use when someone unexpectedly and maybe unpleasantly bursts into your life

benevolence ministry

can't stand the thought of sending her away empty handed.

Here are five steps to use when someone unexpectedly and maybe unpleasantly bursts into your life:

1. The hardest and most important step is to try to understand and connect with the individual or family. Making a personal connection and acquiring an understanding will gradually build your confidence and convey hope to the person in need.

2. Always offer a choice or make a request of the person. That choice or request will immediately test the heart or motives of the person in need. Good benevolence should be a two-way street. When the church asked about Suzy's willingness to meet with someone, they were really asking Suzy to admit her deeper need, the need for change.

3. Make helpful suggestions that fit the situation, such as the Steps to Change class. This is a way of offering hope through practical steps.

4. Ask for a commitment, as the church did when asking if Suzy would meet with a church member.

5. Affirm the person seeking help by praying for them.

Your benevolence ministry will be transformed when you expect better benevolence because you have better expectations. Expect to offer choices for change to people requesting help, in exchange for resources such as food or even money, and expect to have someone available to listen and pray with those who have emergency needs.

The benefits of these better expectations will include these:

- When people seeking help say no to your choices, they won't be able to hold the crisis gun to your head anymore. Letting them say no is boundary setting in a Christ-like way.
- When they say yes, that makes it their choice to participate. People who say yes will be less likely to take advantage of the church's generosity. Saying yes is an early acknowledgement that the choices they're making aren't getting them to where they want to go.
- Having someone from the church meet them personally is the first step to a relationship that could lead to a connection with the church.
- Christians learn stewardship better when they live it together with people in need.

Here are some questions that could change your mercy ministry from being reactive to proactive and one that meets immediate and eternal needs.

- Who do you want to help?
- What help do you want to provide?
- Where do you want to make an impact?
- When do you want to begin?
- How will you measure results?

Remember Suzy? She responded to the choices she was offered and eventually repaid the church for their gift. At this writing she is living with stability and in the fellowship of church friends with whom she meets regularly.

Jenny Forner is the founder and president of New Focus National, a nondenominational agency that helps churches and other faith-based organizations with their benevolence ministries.

Christians learn stewardship better when they live it together with people in need.

iStockphoto

A reflection on the shooting at Red Lake High Scho

They are **all o**

by Bruce D. Martin with contributions from Kent Nerburn

Late in the afternoon of Monday, March 28, I called the Red Lake High School to talk to Diane Schwanz, a dedicated teacher there who coordinates the details of our visit to Red Lake each year. I called twice, but she did not answer. I'll try again tomorrow, I thought.

Little did I know that a few minutes after 3 p.m., about the time I placed my call, 16-year-old Jeff Weise walked into the school, home of the Ogichidaag Warriors, carrying two shotguns and a handgun. He had just killed his grandfather and companion. Ambling through the security gate at the school's entrance, he shot and killed the unarmed guard. He proceeded down the corridor shooting students at random before entering a classroom and killing five students and a teacher. Ten died, and seven were injured.

I read the news after arriving home, a brief, confused report of the shooting. The only name mentioned in this initial press release was Diane, the teacher I had been trying to call. The five students who died were all found in the classroom next to Diane's. Hearing the gunfire, she barricaded her classroom door, preventing the gunman from entering, and ordered her students to lie flat on the floor. Unable to enter her classroom, the student turned the gun on himself.

Change was forced upon them by a student who walked into the classrooms we had visited, aimed a gun at the teachers we met and the students with whom we had shared wild rice, Indian tacos, frybread and friendship.

I have close connections to the Ojibwe people and to the Red Lake Nation in particular. I grew up there. I take Penn State University students there every year to explore the worldview of the Ojibwe people. Last May and June, a group of students traveled with me to the Red Lake, Leech Lake and White Earth Nations. We spent a day at Red Lake High School, walked through that security gate and sat in those classrooms. We enjoyed the Indian tacos students made us for lunch. But more importantly, we met and learned from those teachers and met many of those Red Lake students. Strangers then, friends today.

Lives changed: I awoke on Tuesday morning after a fitful night to a bright warm spring day, far from the cold confines of my northern Minnesota childhood home. I wanted to be in or near Red Lake, to be with those families whose hearts were breaking. I made my way to the Penn State campus, where students were attending classes in a civil manner, hearing brilliant lectures, going about the business of having their lives changed. As I walked to my office in the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, I realized the lives of students at Red Lake High School were also being changed. But change was forced upon them by a student who walked into the classrooms we had visited, aimed a gun at the teachers we met and the students with whom we had shared wild rice, Indian tacos, frybread and friendship.

It is a sad and tragic story, made all the more poignant by my knowledge of the people, the reservation, the land and lakes where it all took place. I sat most of the day, distracted, calling north, writing emails, wishing I could do something.

I plan to return to Red Lake in May with another group of Penn State students, but I cannot be there now. I cannot reach out and touch or grieve with my friends or be present to share the grief of the Red Lake community I have known and loved all my life.

A friend, Darrell Auginash, wrote and asked me to pray for his nephew, airlifted to a Fargo hospital and struggling for his life, a bullet through his lungs and back. Pray. This is something I can do and encourage others to do—people of all faiths, people of no faith—no small thing when we do it together.

om one who used to live in that community

ur children

I can do more. I can also reach out to people in their apartments or homes, in cars or on the bus, on campus or in the surrounding community of State College and ask them to watch.

Watch as journalists and TV reporters fly from their homes and cities, land in Minneapolis, catch a commuter flight to the small airport in the forests of Bemidji and drive their rental cars 30 miles north through the pine and poplar to the Red Lake Reservation. Watch them as they go to the small convenience store, interview a few folks and push their way close to the school building where it all happened on the shore of the great northern lake that gives the reservation its name.

Watch them go into the tribal offices, try to interview the tribal chairman, a young man with a dream of making his reservation a better place, then scurry back on the dark country roads to their well-lighted hotels in Bemidji, where they can issue dispatches about a student caught in a culture of poverty and hopelessness on a rural reservation.

The heart of the matter: It will all be earnest and at least partially true. But it will not get to the heart of the matter. It will not show the love and sense of family at the core of this small reservation community. You will not hear about the generosity of spirit and love that will flow like a fall of water among them. You will not hear about the rich spiritual traditions that will sustain them in their darkness. You will not hear about the strength that has sustained them against all odds for more than 500 years of European occupation. Neither will you hear about the unique sense of grief that fills a culture where all are related, where the drum is the metaphor for community—when the drumhead is struck in one place, the whole membrane shudders, and the sound reverberates everywhere.

What it will do, I'm afraid, is reduce this tragedy to a sociological event. "Rural reservation" is carte blanche for journalistic speculation about social problems and cultural hopelessness.

Watch to see if that is what this story becomes. And wonder why the same story in the wealthy suburbs of Denver or Milwaukee did not immediately become fallow ground for sociological speculation about wealth, anomie and fundamentalist Christianity gone awry.

This Red Lake story is hidden beneath two layers of mythology and misunderstanding that pervade contemporary American culture: "rural" and "Indian reservation." In each lies a series of expectations and misconceptions that obscures the truth of events and makes what takes place there something other than the workaday affairs of our urban and suburban lives.

Watch and see if that mythology and misunderstanding obscures the truth. I know Red Lake. I have walked the trail to its most sacred site, The Narrows. I have danced in Ponemah and stood quietly beside the spirit houses of friends. I know those kids as one can only know by being a Red Lake kid. They are not unlike the students I meet every day at Penn State; they are not unlike our own children who brush their teeth, pack their books and catch the bus every morning.

Sitting Bull, the great Lakota Chief, said it best: "Come, let us put our minds together to see what kind of life we can create for our children."

Sitting Bull, the great Lakota Chief, said it best: "Come, let us put our minds together to see what kind of life we can create for our children."

The children of Red Lake, those who died and those who lived, are our sisters and brothers, our children. Hear their cries and the cries of their parents until you feel, like reverberations from the big drum, the ache deep in your heart.

Bruce D. Martin, director of United Campus Ministry at Penn State University, is a member of University Mennonite Church, State College, Pa. Kent Nerburn, Bemidji, Minn., is director of the oral tradition project at Red Lake and author of Neither Wolf Nor Dog: On the Road with a Native American Elder.

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The best of business and the best of church

Howard L. Brenneman is president of MMA.

A pastor observed two parishioners walking up the sidewalk toward church one morning. The men were engrossed in a business conversation, but the moment they stepped through the church doors they ceased talking. The pastor happened to be at the same door following the service and saw the same men exiting the church. The moment they stepped back onto the sidewalk they resumed their business discussion right where they'd left off.

Too often we have segmented church and business like that. I'm not suggesting we should make business deals inside the church house, but often we think church and business are poles apart when they're not. The best business principles also apply to the church. That's why for many years I've advocated combining the best of church and the best of business in operating our congregations and church organizations.

Some people see a secular and spiritual spectrum, with business on one end and church on the other. They try to keep them apart in the middle. I prefer to think of it as a line graph, with church on the y-axis and business on the x-axis. Find the best of church and draw a horizontal line. Find the best of business and draw a vertical line. Where they intersect is the optimum point.

Combining the best of church and business has a biblical basis. The Gospels make many references to stewardship—being a good steward of your time, talent and health, as well as finances—and accountability for your thoughts and actions. Paul talks about pressing toward the mark of the high calling. That's a strategic business statement that applies to our organizations as well as a good personal statement. The Scriptures also have much to say about how you treat your employees and others.

Unfortunately, people often get the wrong idea about business practices when they hear about hostile takeovers and scandals such as Enron and MCI Worldcom. Some businesses run like that, but they aren't successful over the long term. The business principles that work are these: applying the Golden Rule, building loyalty, integrity, trust, communication, affirmation, coaching and mentoring. These are the same principles that should be found in church. Church and business are harmonious.

Too often in the church—and in business, too—we don't set specific goals. If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. Without guideposts, how do you know if you're moving in the right direction in your journey? Any good business needs to know if it's achieving its goals or it won't survive. And if it's not achieving those goals, it needs to know why and make corrections.

> People need to feel good inside about what's been accomplished. That may send up warning flags about pride, but a false humility is as bad as an overcharged ego.

Then when you reach a goal, celebrate. A lot of Scripture talks about celebration, but Mennonites often aren't comfortable with that part of the Bible. We think we're always short of where we need to be. People need to feel good inside about what's been accomplished. That may send up warning flags about pride, but a false humility is as bad as an overcharged ego. Why shouldn't you feel good about your church growing or doing more mission work or sending your youth on service trips? This helps people feel a sense of accomplishment, and the organization moves forward.

But don't rest on your laurels. Celebrate and move on. Every celebration should be a launching pad into the future.

I often attend an entrepreneurs conference of church businesspeople, and part of that involves telling life stories, the ups and downs, and how people's work relates to their faith. Wouldn't it be wonderful if one Sunday a month someone got up in church and told how they integrated their work life and faith? I know many Christians who don't just practice their faith on Sunday. God should be working through our lives seven days a week. Shouldn't the church encourage that?

I've never found it hard to move from the business world to the church world and back again. They're all one world that doesn't need to be divided by a church door. TM

Correction: The photo on page 18 of the April 5 issue is not of Dave Alleman. Also, Dave is a member of Weavers Mennonite Church.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Strong minds, tender hearts**—Leslie Homer-Cattell
- **Dating rules**—Jeannette S. Buller
- **Both sides of the window**—Ken Yoder

Snyder to retire from Bluffton University

First woman to lead a Mennonite college will leave in 2006 after 10 years.

Lee Snyder

Lee Snyder, Bluffton (Ohio) University president, will retire at the end of her term on July 31, 2006, according to Morris Stutzman, Bluffton's board of trustees chair, at the board's meeting April 2. Snyder, the first woman appointed to head the institution and the first woman to lead any of the Mennonite colleges and universities, has served as Bluffton's president since 1996.

"President Snyder has led Bluffton University during a period of unprecedented growth and vitality with much grace, wisdom and vision," said Stutzman.

Under Snyder's leadership the university has experienced academic program development and national recognition, enrollment growth and the strengthening of Bluffton's financial resources and institutional planning. Bluffton also gained a stronger sense of identity and purpose as a Mennonite school in higher education and in northwest Ohio.

"Bluffton's students, its superb faculty and staff, its clear sense of mission and the distinctives that characterize this place, along with the privilege of working with an extraordinary leadership team, have made my time here rich and satisfying," said Snyder.

Bluffton's graduate programs have expanded and now include three master's programs in education, organizational management and business administration. A second off-site location was developed for nontraditional programs, with classes offered in Piqua and Archbold.

Bluffton has had record enrollment the past three years. During Snyder's tenure, net assets have increased from $20.2 million in 1996-97 to $36.1 million in 2003-04. The operating budget has grown from $16.6 million to a projected $30.2 million in 2005-06.

Snyder created Bluffton's Council of Church Leaders, which has strengthened ties between the church and the institution. From 1999 to 2001 she was chair of the executive board of Mennonite Church USA and later was its first moderator.

"She has been a leader for both the university and the Mennonite Church," said Carlos Romero, executive director for Mennonite Education Agency.

Snyder received her bachelor's and doctorate from the University of Oregon and her master's from James Madison University. Prior to coming to Bluffton, she was vice president and academic dean of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

The Bluffton University board will form a search committee consisting of representatives of the Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite church conferences, trustees, faculty, alumni, students and the local community that will begin the process of selecting Snyder's successor.—*Robin Bowlus, Bluffton University*

President Snyder has led Bluffton University during a period of unprecedented growth and vitality with much grace, wisdom and vision.
—Morris Stutzman

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Hmong Mennonites confront changes

Sons and daughters of immigrants view churches as geared toward their parents.

Courtesy Photo

Youth from the Hmong Mennonite Church in St. Paul, Minn., are encouraged to participate in worship in a variety of ways, including in song.

From his seat in the pews, John Yang would watch the restlessness grow in the youth of Hmong Mennonite Church in the Denver suburb of Arvada. As the sermon stretched on, each word spoken in the Hmong tongue pushed them farther over the edge. Often, Yang says; youth would bail out, leaving the sanctuary before the sermon finished.

Among the Hmong Mennonite churches—five in the United States and one in Canada—differences focus less on ethnicity and more on age.

"The older generation came (from Laos and Thailand) about 20 years ago. They still have difficulty [with English] and the culture," says Chue Vang, pastor of Hmong Mennonite Church of St. Paul, Minn. "The younger generation … lost the language, and they don't know much about the Hmong culture."

Even as first- and second-generation immigrants reconcile their differences, leaders say the youth must be reconciled with the larger Mennonite church.

According to other leaders, including Kuaying Teng, Mennonite Mission Network's minister of Asian ministries, and Shoua Moua, Hmong pastor in Arvada and president of Hmong Mennonite Church USA, sons and daughters of Hmong immigrants can feel disconnected from a church they see as geared toward their parents.

"They grew up here, they went to school here, and they feel different from their parents. We cannot use the same way to reach out to both, even if they're in the same family," says Moua.

The churches often hold split worship services to account for differing needs and views between the generations. For example, Moua says his older worshipers do not believe men and women should take part in the same Bible study group, while the youth have no such qualms. But separating the young from the old is not a long-term answer, so Hmong leaders are mixing things up. Pastors are pushing the use of both English and Hmong during sermons and are planning activities that allow the youth to take part in worship instead of simply watching the adults.

"I encourage the youth to be part of the service," Vang says. "The church's future will belong to the youth."

For the 22-year-old Yang, youth leader for Moua's Arvada congregation, involving the youth requires English and a different approach to teaching—focusing on discussion rather than lectures, and practical application of the Bible to life. A shift toward contemporary music allows youth to share their talents with instrument and voice. Since these changes began several years ago, he says the frequency of the midsermon exoduses has decreased.

But even as first- and second-generation immigrants reconcile their differences, leaders say the youth must be reconciled with the larger Mennonite church. Yang says his youth sometimes feel left out of larger Mennonite activities. He is looking to link with other youth groups for fun, study and sharing; one of his ideas is to create a Web site for young, Denver-area Mennonites to update one another on their activities and faith journeys.
—Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network News Service

Hymn Sing Weekend

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Salt, shrimp farms rebuilt after tsunami

Eastern Mennonite Missions contributes $124,000 for work in Indonesia.

In his recent visit to the headquarters for Eastern Mennonite Missions, Frits Triman, chairman of an Indonesian Mennonite mission agency called PIPKA—one of EMM's partners in Asia—reported on a trip a PIPKA team made to Aceh 40 days after the tsunami.

Of the 4.5 million people in the province, more than 220,000 are confirmed dead or missing. As the PIPKA team drove into town, they passed a mass grave of around 20,000 bodies. After witnessing such extreme loss and devastation as well as the subsequent relief efforts, Triman said the main task now is to give people back their livelihood.

"This has been a very closed region," Triman said. "Before the tsunami I would have been afraid to visit, but now the villagers welcomed us and begged us to stay. In some settings we were the first Christians they had ever met."

Triman said that PIPKA teams are working in four villages to help restore salt and shrimp farming and fishing industries. They are also helping restore potable water. EMM has shared $124,000 of relief funds with PIPKA to assist with these efforts.

In expressing thanks for the gift, Triman shared stories of two other special gifts contributed for the ongoing relief and reconstruction efforts in Aceh.

Frits Triman

The PIPKA team visited this salt farmer, whose processing plant was not destroyed by the tsunami. Their teams will help restore similar farms nearby that were destroyed.

The first was a gift of $10,000 from a house church in China. The church took up an offering to aid tsunami victims, then prayed about whether to send the money to India, Sri Lanka or Indonesia. At first they crossed Indonesia off the list because ethnic Chinese have often been persecuted in Indonesia. But as the church prayed and discussed further, they felt they should give the gift to Indonesia—precisely because they were persecuting the Chinese. They wanted to obey the words of Jesus, "Love your enemies. Do good to those who persecute you."

The second gift came from the River of Life Church in Cambodia. This small, rural and extremely poor congregation took up an offering to give to Indonesia for tsunami relief. They gave 51,300 Riel, the equivalent of $12.44. Triman said it reminded him of the story of the widow in Luke 21, "As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' he said, 'this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in all she had to live on.' "

In addition to the funds shared with PIPKA, EMM gave an initial gift of $5,000 to EMM worker Mr. Vellaramala, who was in south India for a baptismal service when the tsunami struck.

He provided medicine, food, clothes and other immediate material assistance for villagers in the coastal areas.

If additional funds become available, Vellaramala and partnering churches hope to assist 14 villagers who are in need of fishing boats, nets and other household items.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions News Service*

Before the tsunami, I would have been afraid to visit [Aceh] but now the villagers welcomed us and begged us to stay. In some settings we were the first Christians they had ever met.
—Frits Triman

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MMA, Mission Network funding strong

Mennonite Publishing Network's financial situation continues to be fragile.

When Marty Lehman began as director of financial development for Mennonite Church USA last year, she discovered that many givers faithfully support the denomination. Six months later, she reports that these contributions have helped stabilize the denomination's finances. Lehman visits congregations, area conferences and church leaders to promote a firstfruits giving spirit throughout Mennonite Church USA.

"I've personally experienced a lot of trust and a lot of appreciation on the part of constituents for how Mennonite Church USA strives to fulfill its calling," she says.

Lehman tells the story of how the U.S. government audited one Mennonite couple several times because it didn't believe that one family would give so much of its income to the church.

"This is just one such story of dozens that I hear when I travel around to our various area conferences and congregations," she says.

It's giving like this that makes collaboration on fulfilling God's mission possible, she says. This collaboration includes the efforts of Mennonite Church USA's executive leadership and ministries of education, publishing, stewardship and mission.

Agency leaders say overall giving in 2004 is providing an increasingly solid base for Mennonite Church USA—and they are grateful.

"We exceeded all our targets for income in fiscal year 2004, and we are grateful for the generosity of constituents, area conferences and churchwide agencies," says Ron Byler, associate executive director for Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board spent slightly less than what it budgeted at $1.92 million but received income of $1.94 million, ending its fiscal year on Jan. 31 with a margin of slightly more than $23,000.

Mennonite Mission Network had its first stable contribution year since its inception in February 2002, agency leaders say. As a result of its positive year, Mission Network celebrated the emergence of new global partnerships, saw 33 people begin new international assignments.

"I believe these increased numbers of ambassadors of the gospel represent an interest in the Mission Network living to its vision, with all congregations and every part of the church becoming active in mission," says Stanley Green, Mission Network's executive director.

During the fiscal year that ended on Jan. 31, Mission Network reported that contributions remained steady compared with those of the previous fiscal year: Contributions totaled some $6.4 million, or about $30,000 more than last year.

"That essentially means that levels remained constant," says Peter Graber, senior executive for Missional Church Advancement. "In each previous year, the contributions for the operating budget had declined. This is the first year they remained level or slightly higher."

Agency leaders say overall giving in 2004 is providing an increasingly solid base for Mennonite Church USA—and they are grateful.

MMA had one of its best years ever, says Mel Claassen, chief financial officer for MMA

"In many ways, everything went right," he says. "Having this many things go right in the same year is extremely rare."

Mennonite Foundation had a particularly good year, thanks to outstanding charitable-giving levels that have been breaking records in recent years. Nearly $51 million in donations in 2004 will be distributed to congregations and other organizations in the future.

MMA projected a $7.5 million gain for last fiscal year but actually earned $8.6 million across all its services before paying for its fraternal programs. MMA Sharing Fund, one of MMA's fraternal programs, gave out more than $1.1 million in grants during 2004; congregations match these grants to help people with various needs. The grants make up the lion's share of money the Sharing Fund provided during 2004, which totaled more than $1.8 million last year. Half the 1,700 Anabaptist churches MMA serves requested grants last year.

Mennonite Publishing Network has not yet reported its figures for the recently concluded fiscal year. Ron Rempel, executive director for MPN, says that while preliminary figures are available, the final audit is not, and so he must wait to give a full public report.

"Even though the audit is not complete, it looks like a break-even year, and we are grateful for that," Rempel says. "We are also pleased with the $200,000 we received in donations from individuals and congregations across the United States and Canada. I would also say that our financial situation is fragile, so we keep working at it."

Rempel cites both internal and external factors as reasons for the fragility. Stiff competition comes from "big box stores" that sometimes sell religious books at the same price that Provident Bookstores—MPN's bookstores—buys them.

MPN continues to work at its debt-reduction plan, created because of MPN's earlier financial crisis. Servicing the remaining $3.5 million of debt required $550,000 in principal and interest payments last year, Rempel says.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Editor's note: *The fiscal year for Mennonite Education Agency and its schools ends on June 30. We plan to publish a report about MEA and school fiscal year end finances in August.*

Menno Simons' birthplace gets attention

Dutch Mennonites plan to construct a Centre for Study in Witmarsum.

Dutch Mennonites plan to construct an international Menno Simons Centre for Study and to rebuild the only monument marking the birthplace of Menno Simons in Witmarsum, the Netherlands. The monument, erected in Witmarsum 125 years ago, needs restoration. There are no shortage of plans, but financial resources are a problem for the time being.

In the party tent set up for the approximately 200 people on a day of remembering and looking to the future, de Graaf explained not only the background and history of the Menno Simons monument but also future plans. Because the foundation is sinking, a thorough renovation is necessary. In addition, the intention is that the hidden church, which once existed on the spot where the monument stands, be outlined in its original form using simple materials such as walls made of hedges in keeping with the idea of field preaching.

Piet Vellinga, an interested Mennonite and president of the Village and Company Friesland (Dorp en Bedrijf Friesland), did a feasibility study of the renovation of the monument and of the Menno-routes through Northwest Friesland. He said three bicycle trails and two auto routes would travel through Friesland and stop along historic Mennonite churches in Friesland, among other things. He presented finished plans for the new international Menno Simons Centre for Study. Land next to the monument will have to be purchased to erect the center. For the many hundreds of Mennonites who travel to Witmarsum every year, Witmarsum is already a kind of place of pilgrimage. Partly to be of service to these foreign travelers, placing the center so close to the monument is logical.

"It should become a place of meeting, contemplation, inspiration and study," says Anne S. de Jong, president of the Algemene Doopsgezind Societeit (the Dutch Mennonite Conference) and member of the study group that is developing and supervising the plans.

A quilt made during the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Zimbabwe in 2003 hung on the wall behind panel participants. Four hundred people worked on the quilt, which became a symbol of diversity—seen in colors and solidarity—as demonstrated in the collective effort.—*Bart Smits for Mennonite World Conference News Service*

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Troupe performs AIDS skits in Rwanda

MCC partner Peace House trains young adult clubs to promote awareness.

Jenna A. Stoltzfus

In Kigali, Rwanda, Violette Mukamurara and Thomas Ndizeye perform a skit on AIDS.

Violette Mukamurara has a problem. She has become pregnant and does not know if her boyfriend has HIV.

"Nothing can stop love," Mukamurara says, but her pregnancy distresses her. On the advice of a friend, Mukamurara decides to go to a hospital to get tested for HIV and receive help in giving birth to a healthy baby.

This is the plot of a lively skit performed by a troupe of young adults to educate young people about AIDS. The actors are members of a club called Rengera Ubuzima, or "Save Life," which gives theatrical, choral and dance performances on AIDS in schools. Their skit tells a fictional story, but one that illustrates a problem facing many who come of age in Rwanda today.

A high AIDS rate is one consequence of the Rwandan genocide, which killed nearly a million people in 1994.

A high AIDS rate is one consequence of the Rwandan genocide, which killed nearly a million people in 1994. Rape was widespread, and in the aftermath of the genocide, prostitution became a means of survival for some women. As Rwanda struggles to distance itself from the horrors of that time, the young adults of Rengera Ubuzima and other peace clubs are on a dual mission to stop the spread of AIDS and to build social unity.

"We teach the population to be united, so we can work against AIDS together," says Thomas Ndizeye, the club president.

Mennonite Central Committee is supporting Rengera Ubuzima and 14 other young adult clubs in promoting AIDS awareness and peace in Rwanda. Each group is organized and trained by Peace House, an MCC partner organization in Kigali, which is a ministry of Rwandan Evangelical Friends churches.

Conflict between Rwanda's ethnic Hutu majority and ethnic Tutsi minority was the basis of the 1994 genocide, when Hutu extremists organized the mass killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Rengera Ubuzima's 43 members come from both ethnic groups. Among the club's four leaders, two are Hutus and two are Tutsis, and all were orphaned by the 1994 genocide or the civil war that immediately followed it.

"Now we are good friends, even though our parents were killed in different ways," Ndizeye says.

Rengera Ubuzima gathers twice a week to sing and rehearse its skits, and the club performs about once a month for community gatherings at schools. MCC's funding allowed Rengera Ubuzima to purchase traditional dance costumes, as well as soccer balls, for a women's league. With MCC's support, Peace House is organizing 10 new clubs this year. N. Adock Musafiri, the program coordinator, says Peace House is beginning to train clubs to promote human rights, democracy and environmental protection, in addition to AIDS awareness and peace education.

"With the problems in Rwanda … it's difficult to change the minds of the old people," says Musafiri, a former government official. "But with the youth, it's not difficult. … I hope that the youth can change, so tomorrow they can have a nice country."—*Tim Shenk of MCC News Service*

Quake response

As part of a multimillion-dollar tsunami response in Asia, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is also committing $50,000 to respond to devastation on the island of Nias from a March 28 earthquake. The quake struck off the coast of Indonesia on the same fault line as the Dec. 26, 2004, quake that created a tsunami that killed tens of thousands of people in 12 countries around the Indian Ocean.

MCC workers in Banda Aceh, Aceh Province, Indonesia, report that they were shaken by the March 28 quake but are safe.

MCC is responding to the earthquake through its partner organization YAKKUM Emergency Unit (YEU), which is an arm of the Christian Public Health Association of Java.

YEU is providing 21 medical and logistical staff, mobile clinics and clean water and food. It is also building toilet and shower facilities and supplying body bags, gloves and boots for workers removing the dead.

The YEU medical team provides medical services in eight locations in the island's main town and built the first emergency hospital in Nias.

MCC and its partner agencies are contributing more than $12 million in response to the December 2004 tsunami.—*MCC News Service*

WORKERS

Eberly, Peter, was licensed towards ordination March 13 as youth minister at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Johnston, Andrew, was licensed toward ordination Feb. 20 at Atlanta (Ga.) Mennonite Fellowship.

Kindy, Jeremy, began as stewardship counselor for Mennonite Mission Network on Feb. 28. Responsibilities include building and maintaining relationships with donors, planning events for Mission Network alumni, pastors and donors, and visiting churches and pastors to encourage support. Kindy works from the Mennonite Mission Network office in Newton, Kan.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Aguero, John Michael, Feb. 28, to Juan and Shannon Schell Aguero, Asunción, Paraguay.

Cliff, Alexis Michelle, March 2, to Jason and Shelley Cliff, Paxton, Ill.

Copeland, Katelyn Rose, Feb. 23, to Travis and Jamie Lehman Copeland, Lancaster, Pa.

Delp, Allison Elizabeth, March 15, to Richard and Kristin Decker Delp, Harleysville, Pa.

Diener, Dylan Edward, March 5, to Daniel and Lynn Eastman Diener, Goshen, Ind.

Duncan, Layna Nicole, March 1, to Kurt and Michelle Short Duncan, Celina, Ohio.

Eby, Rodney Carson, March 4, to Rodney and Paula Hershberger Eby, Hartville, Ohio.

Godshall, Norah Elizabeth, March 6, to Steve and Sara Godshall, Harrisonburg, Va.

Grieser, Eleanor Lee Ann, Feb. 12, to Tim Grieser and Carrie Dunham, Pettisville, Ohio.

Hedrick, Willem Richard, Feb. 18, to Tim and Janice Maust Hedrick, Waterloo, Ont.

Hinchliff, Kendall Jean and Elise Rose (twins), Feb. 24, to Jon and Sophie Jacobsen Hinchliff, Las Vegas, Nev.

Kauffman, Peyton Alexander, Dec. 24, 2004, to Chad Kauffman and Trina Newcomb, Archbold, Ohio.

Kiser, Grant Bishop and Megan Ann (twins), March 25, to Jason and Sara Bishop Kiser, Harrisonburg, Va.

Kolb, Madeleine Ann, March 9, to Jeryl Kolb and Annie Lareau, Seattle.

Litwiller, Abigail Lucy, March 9, to Jeff and Chris Wyse Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Martin, Lily Bai-lu, Sept. 2, 2003, received for adoption Nov. 9, 2004, by Stefan and Heidi Swartzentruber Martin, Flourtow, Pa.

Milsap, Anna Marie, Feb. 28, to Curtis and Sarah Chisholm Milsap, Springfield, Mo.

Newswanger, Kathryn Mackinsey, Jan. 5, to Jon and Shawn Brady Newswanger, Salem, Ore.

Nice, Annika Yoder, Feb. 16, to Kevin and Wendy Yoder Nice, Indianapolis.

Ott, Henry Bo, March 7, to Steven and Michele Epp Ott, Ashland, Neb.

Stutzman, Dawson Carter, March 3, to Stacey and Julie Gerber Stutzman, Sarasota, Fl.

Tessman, Ava Isabel, March 2, to Chad and Jessica Friesen Tessman, Omaha, Neb.

Thomas, Violet Brigelle, March 11, to Todd and Brigelle Thomas, Wauseon, Ohio.

Troyer, Luke Edward, March 2, to Bronson and Anne Stafford Troyer, Indianapolis.

Unternahrer, Marcelene Lucille, March 17, to Mike and Karen Unternahrer, Shipshewana, Ind.

Yoder, Emma Grace, March 4, to Andre and Lori Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Gerber/Nofziger: Shirley Gerber, Archbold, Ohio, and Donald "Pete" Nofziger, Archbold, Feb. 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

DEATHS

Beckler, Raymond, 77, Cairo, Neb., died Feb. 26. Spouse: Neomi Beckler. Parents: Sidney and Minnie Gascho Beckler. Children: Candace Schweitzer, Ed, Randy, Ellen Sebulsky; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at First Baptist Church, Cairo.

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Bloom, Donna Harding, 75, Belleville, Pa., died Feb. 20. Spouse: Miles H. Bloom (deceased). Parents: Russell and Rachel Harding. Children: Michael R., Roger L. Funeral: Feb. 26 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Blosser, Carol, 86, Bluffton, Ohio, died March 8. Parents: William and Barbara Blosser. Funeral: March 12 at Chiles and Sons Lamen Funeral Home, Bluffton.

Branner, Edith Driver, 84, Harrisonburg, Va., died March 3. Spouse: John R. Branner (deceased). Parents: Rhodes H. and Anna Weaver Driver. Children: Joanna Lynn, Judy Branner Bontrager. Funeral: March 6 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Dick, Hulda Dirks, 94, Turpin, Okla., died Jan. 8 of cancer. Spouse: Nickolia Dick (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Becker Dirks. Children: Florence Regier, Shirley Kroeker, Lorene Goering; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Jan. 10 at Turpin Mennonite Church.

Dirks, Johnny, 92, Hesston, Kan., died March 6. Spouse: Eva Dick Dirks (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Becker Dirks. Children: Joy Ann Imel, LaVerle Schrag; five grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at Turpin (Okla.) Mennonite Church.

Engel, Susan V. Umble, 91, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 19 of renal failure. Spouse: Martin N. Engel (deceased). Parents: Joseph L. and Fannie Yost Umble. Children: Maynard, Roy, Laure Stoltzfus; six grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 22 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Fahlsing, Ernest "Ernie" H., 89, Topeka, Ind., died March 8. Spouse: Rozella Edna Yoder Fahlsing. Parents: Charles and Martha Woebbeking Fahlsing. Children: Kathleen A., Roger A.; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 11 in Goshen, Ind.

Franz, August, 79, Henderson, Neb., died March 12. Spouse: Blance Dick Franz. Parents: Isaac and Sarah Epp Franz. Children: Shari Peters, Mel, Carolyn Peters, Randy; 14 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 16 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Gerig, Mabel Wyse, 97, Goshen, died March 31. Spouse: Vernon S. Gerig (deceased). Parents: Chris and Mary Miller Wyse. Children: Marianna Roth, Elaine Schrock; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Goertz, Arnold E., 80, Buhler, Kan., died March 14 of leukemia. Spouse: Genevieve Goertz (deceased). Parents: David P. and Helena C. Ediger Goertz. Child: Robert; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Goertz, Genevieve Dirks, 80, Buhler, Kan., died March 17 of Parkinson's disease. Spouse: Arnold E. Goertz (deceased). Parents: David T. and Sara Zielke Dirks. Child: Robert; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Hershberger, Miriam Lois, 50, Philadelphia, died March 10 following an accident. Parents: James and Gladys Hershberger. Funeral: March 13 at Woodland Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

Hess, Paul L., Sr., 79, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 27. Spouse: A. Elizabeth Hess. Parents Eli S. and Macy Longenecker Hess. Children: Paul, James R., Stanley W., Barbara A. Hash, Henry R.; 15 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 4 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Histand, Karen A. Sauer, 51, Ambler, Pa., died Oct. 22, 2004. Spouse: Barry Histand. Child: Lori A. Funeral: Oct. 29, 2004, at Ambler Mennonite Church.

Johnson, Lemoine Lyle, 83, Shickley, Neb., died March 3 of lung cancer. Spouse: Phyllis Lauber Johnson. Parents: R. Fred and Myrtle Hulquist Johnson. Children: Deann Cummins, Arlan, Craig, Bruce; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Salem Mennonite Church, Shickley.

Koehn, Verna Rachel Abrahams, 86, McPherson, Kan., died March 11. Spouse: Ormand L. Koehn (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Anna Dalke Abrahams. Children: Jim, Judy Anderson, Joyce Benning; seven grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 15 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Landis, Raymond P., 77, Lancaster, Pa., died March 14. Spouse: Jane Hess Landis. Parents: Phares and Martha Groff Landis. Children: Larry, Marilyn Walters, Shirley Ann; four grandchildren. Funeral: March 16 in Lancaster.

Mast, Glen O., 92, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died March 4. Spouse: Alice O. Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Calvin and Etta Miller Mast. Children: Nancy Rittenhouse, Davis, Dale; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg, Ohio.

Miller, Ruth Yoder, 83, Goshen, Ind., died March 13. Spouse: N. Emerson Miller (deceased). Parents: Charles and Susanna Heatwole Yoder. Children: Sue Schaaf, Phylllis Wengerd, Stefan, Wendell; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Miller, Wayne, 87, Miller, S.D., died March 5. Spouse: Mildred Rediger Miller. Parents: Joesph and Elizabeth Schweitzer Miller. Children: Mary, Penny, Russell, Randall, Jeffrey; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at First Nazarene Church, Miller.

Peachey, Paulene Zook, 84, Belleville, Pa., died March 2. Spouse: Byron J. Peachey (deceased). Parents: Frank and Sadie Zook; stepmother Anna Zook. Children: Esther Murphy, Joyce Yoder, B. Frank; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

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Pletcher, Harvey, 95, Perryton, Texas, died March 5. Spouse: Anna Beth Bowen Pletcher (deceased). Parents: Thomas and Susanna Berkey Pletcher. Child: Larry; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 7 at Perryton Mennonite Church.

Preheim, Herbert, 85, Marion, S.D., died March 9. Spouse: Marguerite Anderson. Parents: Jacob and Mary Preheim. Children: Bruce, Keith, Monica Jensen, Bradley; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: March 12 at Salem Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Reichenbach, Dale D., 83, Bluffton, Ohio, died March 11. Spouse: Anna Ruth Lehman Reichenbach. Parents: Henry and Emma Badertscher Reichenbach. Children: Mona, Bruce, David, Marsha; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 14 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Rufenacht, Velma Nafziger, 96, Archbold, Ohio, died March 12. Spouse: Jesse Rufenacht (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Amanda Schmucker Nafziger. Children: Donald, Lowell, Virginia Aeschliman; 12 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; seven great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 16 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Ruth, Marjorie, 98, Beatrice, Neb., died Feb. 21. Memorial service: Feb. 27 at Beatrice Mennonite Church.

Ruth, Susan Landis, 95, Souderton, Pa., died Feb. 11. Spouse: Henry L. Ruth. Parents: Abraham and Susan Alderfer Landis. Children: John L., Lois R. Kennel, Martyne R. Wetzel, Carolyn L., Siegfried Rebnegger; 14 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Schrock, Freeman A., 82, died March 10. Spouse: Mildred Burkey Schrock (deceased). Children: Donald, Judy Stephenson; four grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 15 at Emma Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Siemens, Mark, 58, Lancaster, Pa., died March 8. Spouse: Jan Lautt Siemens. Parents: Ernest and Laura Siemens. Children: Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, Brad; one grandchild. Funeral: March 12 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Stuckey, Walter, 95, West Unity, Ohio, died March 10 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Virgie Amstutz Stuckey. Parents: Aaron and Sarah Eicher Stuckey. Children: William, Patricia Eberly; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 13 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Swegheimer, Margaret Steiner, 88, Canton, Ohio, died March 6. Spouse: George Swegheimer (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Ardie Wertz Steiner. Children: Doreen Klan, Duane, Howard, Norman; nine grandchildren. Funeral: March 9 at Schneeberger Funeral Home, Canton, Ohio.

Umble, Anna Lois, 90, Ephrata, Pa., died March 1 of cva. Spouse: Omar K. Umble (deceased). Parents: Jacob E. and Rebecca Mast Kurtz. Children: Fred, J. Wendell, Betty Lou Buckwalter; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 3 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen, Pa.

Wiens, Olivia Ruth Reimer, 88, Inman, Kan., died Feb. 24. Children: Robert, El Roy, Ronald, Arlen, Orville; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 28 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Wenger, Stella Roth, 84, Wayland, Iowa, died Feb. 18 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Harold Wenger. Parents: Ben and Mary Graber Roth. Children: Alice Hsu, Richard, Joanne denBleyker, Lois Klopfenstein, Rod, Marilyn Hershberger, Ruth Brenneman, Gary; 17 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 21 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Woelk, Edna Fast, 86, Newport, Wash., died Jan. 26. Spouse: Frank G. Woelk (deceased). Parents: John and Agnes Hiebert Fast. Children: Joan Messer, Hilda Arbeiter, Betty Wendle, John, Evelyn Knotts, Frank, Lois Bowen. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Newport, Wash.

Yoder, Beulah B., 82, died March 7. Spouse: Golan A. Yoder. Children: Lucy Bontrager, Virginia Gingerich, Gary D., James D., Joel D., Ronald; 13 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 11 at Emma Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Zook, Lydia A. Schrock, 100, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 19. Spouse: Lawrence A. Schrock (deceased). Parents: Levi and Nettie Yoder Zook. Stepchildren: James, Richard, David; 10 step-grandchildren; 24 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 23 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen, and Feb. 25 at Harrisonville (Mo.) Mennonite Church.

Zook, Mary Ellen, 89, Kalona, Iowa, died March 10. Parents: Lewis and Clara Stutzman Zook. Funeral: March 12 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.ca

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or djwhite@westernmenoniteschool.org

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the position of ***math instructor***. Send résumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.

Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 thru grade eight, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire this summer. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Rd., Newport News, VA 23602; or LJShowalter@aol.com.

Penn View Christian School is seeking an enthusiastic ***full-time middle school music teacher*** beginning in the 2005-06 school year. Responsibilities include teaching general music (grades 6-8), directing vocal and handbell choirs, and instructing small instrumental groups. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for 617 students in preschool through eighth grade. Send your résumés to Rose Lambright, Middle School Principal, Penn View Christian School, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964, phone 215-723-1196, Web site at www.pennview.org.

Full-time pastor in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Congreagtional profile available. MLI required. Contact Gerald Bradfield http://home.ntelos.net/~lynsidemenn; phone 540-942-4572 H.

Mennonite Central Committee is looking for a ***human resources director,*** based in Akron, Pa. The director leads a 14-member department that carries out much of the human resource function of MCC, including recruitment, screening, placement, training and care of workers; compensation and benefits administration; personnel policy development and maintenance of personnel data. Qualifications include experience in personnel management and administration, knowledge of human resources policies, practices and tools, and solid skills in writing, problem-solving and negotiation. Cross-cultural experience and prior Christian service preferred. Candidates from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and /or bilingual (Spanish/English) candidates, and women are encouraged to apply. Contact Prem Dick (psd@mcc.org) for a copy of the job description.

Elementary and PE teaching positions for the coming school year. Consider joining our supportive Christian school community. Contact Thomas Burnett, Principal, **Hinkletown Mennonite School**, 272 Wanner Road, Ephrata, PA 17522; 717-354-6705; tburnett@hms.pvt.k12.pa.us; Web www.hms.pvt.k12.pa.us.

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The news is brought to you by …

Gordon Houser

When you sit down to watch the evening news on your local channel, do you simply assume the news is coming from that local station? Do you ever wonder who produced it? Maybe you should.

Newspapers, if not your local TV station, have reported that the Bush administration hired a public relations firm that has been sending video releases to TV stations around the country. In one release, a jubilant Iraqi-American told a camera crew in Kansas City, "Thank you, Bush. Thank you, U.S.A.," for a segment about reaction to the fall of Baghdad.

Most TV stations failed to mention that the scene was choreographed by the PR firm and that it was paid for by tax dollars to the U.S. government.

The Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, said the video news releases amount to illegal "covert propaganda" when they fail to make plain that the government is behind the releases.

The U.S. Justice Department, however, concluded last month that the practice was appropriate as long as the videos presented factual information about government programs.

White House press secretary Scott McClellan suggested the lack of disclosure about the video releases was the fault of the broadcasters, not the government.

Questions arose about government media practices after the revelation that conservative columnists were paid to promote administration policies and did not tell their audiences they had received federal money. President Bush, after the practice was disclosed, said it was wrong and ordered that it stop.

In a March 26 op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, Marion Just, a professor of political science at Wellesley College, and Tom Rosenstiel, director of the Project for Excellence in Journalism in Washington, point to a study of local TV news directors that showed that a quarter to a third of news directors in their surveys showed video news releases and disclosed the source "occasionally," "rarely" or "never."

Why? While audiences for local news have been declining, write Just and Rosenstiel, "the companies that own these stations have generally continued to expect high earnings, usually profit margins in excess of 40 percent. To meet those demands, most stations have added programming, usually without adding resources."

With local broadcasters being asked to do more with less, they've had to use more prepackaged news. "We don't have to search far to discover why the Bush administration has succeeded so well in getting its news releases on the air," write Just and Rosenstiel. "The public companies that own TV stations are so intent on increasing their stock price and pleasing their shareholders that they are squeezing the news out of the news business."

In our consumerist culture, the bottom line of news is often money rather than truth. Why? Because customers—that's you and me—want to watch and hear what pleases us, what we agree with. We are not demanding to know what really happened.

In the former Soviet Union, the government-sponsored and controlled newspaper was called *Pravda*, or "truth." The citizens knew that most of what they read there was not truth but propaganda. What about us? Do we know where our news comes from? Do we care?

In order not to fall prey to such practices, you may want to get your news from a variety of sources, and not just those you agree with. Also, depend less on TV for your news and more on print. Finally, practice something not encouraged in our culture: Think.

ART

Don Swartzentruber of Winona Lake, Ind., has completed a collection of artwork, he writes, "that explores Mennonite theology or community and its relationship to popular culture." His collection is available for viewing at www.swartzentruber.com with a link to **Pop-Mennonite.** He presents "carnivalesque images that manifest form cultural critique and autobiography. They evolve from a rigorous religious background juxtaposed with an early fascination with pop culture," he writes.

VIDEOS/DVDS

Thermostat, a new peace education resource for youth groups and congregations from Mennonite Central Committee (www.mcc.org/thermostat), includes numerous short clips (interviews, images, songs, speeches) under seven categories: peacemaking, imagination, allegiance, security, terrorism, camouflage and nonviolence. Many speakers are young people, though some of these are less substantive than others. The DVD includes a study guide PDF. Good for discussion.

BOOKS

The Battle for Middle-earth: Tolkien's Divine Design in *The Lord of the Rings* by Fleming Rutledge (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) is a commentary that celebrates Tolkien's grand epic. While Tolkien fans will especially appreciate this book, Rutledge unlocks key theological themes that will reward any reader. Unlike other books on the *Rings*, this one does not merely lift out theological themes but goes through the book(s) in order, letting the subtle yet clear themes emerge. She quotes often from Tolkien's letters, showing that these themes were part of his original intention. Along the way she offers comments on the Peter Jackson films of the books, often critical of how his interpretation skews Tolkien's points. Tolkien wrote his epic in the shadow of world war. We also live under a shadow, Rutledge writes, while "wise, generous leadership is in short supply" and "self-righteousness abounds." She goes on: "The lust for the 'Power that Dominates' has bored into the core of America like Sauron into the very core of Minas Tirith." God calls us—as does Tolkien's story—to repentance and hope.

It used to be let nothing

go to waste

now it's let nothing

go to waist

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Everett J. Thomas

Naming rights

"And let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."—Genesis 11:4b

Stewardship Sunday, observed by Mennonite Church USA this year on May 1, is a good day to connect worship and money. Since the word "worship" means "worth-ship," the act of offering our money to God is a worship ritual that reveals what God is worth to us.

But increasingly our offerings and charitable giving include a claim to self-worth rather than God's worth. One indicator of this problem is whose name is on the money: ours or God's?

As early as the tower of Babel, God's people have been tempted to make names for themselves rather than making a name for God. This ancient sin creeps into our giving patterns; the temptation is to attach our names—or the name of our congregation—with the money we give. Doing so satisfies a desire to be known for our good works. It also provides a little name insurance.

When our name is associated with a ministry or project bearing the values we hold, we get satisfaction that those who know about it might remember us—and honor us—for those values. It is a way to ensure there will at least be a few indentations in the sands of time, proving we were here.

The temptation is to link our names—or the name of our congregation—with the money we give.

This is the same sin for which Yahweh punished Noah's descendants when they attempted to build a tower on the plain of Shinar.

In Genesis 11, the people were fearful that they would disappear from history. They wanted to do something remarkable so that others would remark about it—and remember them.

In the sparsely populated Ancient Near Eastern world, disappearing from history was a probability for nomadic tribes fighting to survive after the flood. In that culture, a name revealed a person's essence and was all that was left after one died. The same is still true today; many of us also carry the impulse to make our names indelible. We hope that there is something special about our name.

But when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we begin by saying, "Hallowed be thy name" (KJV).

To pray these words means that we empty ourselves of ourselves. To pray this prayer means that the only Name that matters is God's. It means we trust God to take care of any archiving that should be done about our existence.

Sometimes that trust falls short, and we want to do a few things just in case the historical record needs a footnote or two. Doing so reveals our lack of faith and the way we miss the mark in giving all to God.

I confess that when I get an annual report from one of the church schools or institutions to which we contribute directly, I immediately look for my name on the donor list. There is guilty pleasure in knowing I am on the record; my name is there permanently—even if in a tiny, six-point font.

Our church agencies are learning to give us such naming rights. Our need to have our names attached to an identifiable ministry or program leaves them little choice—especially when they receive more money as they use the practice.

This is designer giving: You tell us how you want you charitable dollars spent and we'll customize a project for you and—if you want—put your name (or your group's name) on it.

Noah's descendants also wanted glory. The Genesis 11 story reports that God frustrated their scheme because "this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose to do will ... be impossible for them."

God saw that they wanted to become omniscient. Consequently, if they had their own glory and notoriety (that constituted worth in the Ancient Near Eastern world), they would no longer need God.

But other stories and heroes in the Bible demonstrate a more faithful "worth-ship." King David is venerated because he knew his place, although he was the wealthiest and most powerful person of his day. Psalm 115, attributed to David, begins with a reminder for us all as we celebrate Stewardship Sunday: "Not to us, O Lord, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness."—*ejt*

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strong minds tender hearts

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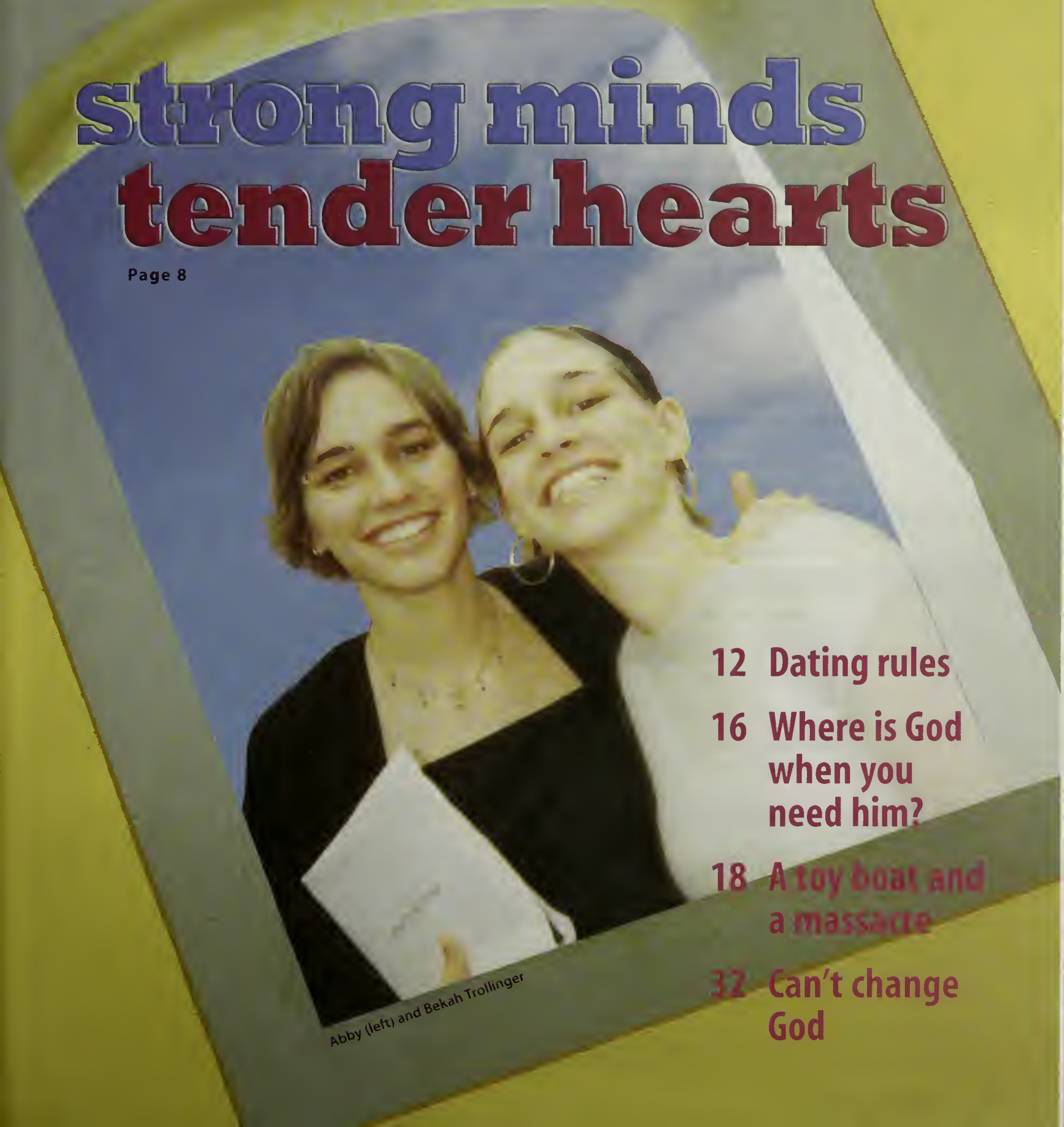

Abby (left) and Bekah Trollinger

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Mayonnaise on Eddie Haskell's sandwich

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I first noticed it while having a discussion with my mother-in-law about bathroom cleansers. I spent five minutes describing the virtues of Mr. Clean. "Takes the soap scum off without scrubbing. Leaves your bathroom smelling clean and fresh."

Then I realized what was happening to me.

I used to be a regular watcher of "Leave It to Beaver" and its early-1960s version of the normal American family: Ward and June Cleaver and their two sons, Wally and Theodore, better known as the Beaver. Later, as I grew older, I knew there could be no worse fate than to become Ward Cleaver, a man who'd put on a tie before shaving.

Then along came Mr. Clean and that revealing discussion with Marilou's mother. In my effort to avoid becoming Ward Cleaver, I never noticed that I was becoming June.

Don't misunderstand. I don't wear cocktail dresses all day or use the good dishes for supper with the kids. I've never given or been invited to a tea party. Yet somehow I've become domesticated to the point that I actually spend time thinking about Mr. Clean and soap scum.

As a marriage partner and parent, I am not demeaning the importance of all that goes into caring for a home and children. And I am not suggesting that it's worse to be June than to be Ward.

The thing is, I don't want to be either. But there is something in our culture, maybe even in our human nature, that pushes us into a definition of self that is less than what we are meant to be. There is something limiting and domesticating about day-to-day life in our society. And I recall that animals were domesticated so to be more easily consumed.

Back to June Cleaver. In one episode June stepped out of character and, I like to think, revealed a deeper, more essential June. Eddie Haskell was at the Cleaver home and was his usual sly, condescending self. "Gee, Mrs. Cleaver, what a lovely dress you're wearing."

Later, while discussing the lunch June was preparing for the guys, Eddie let her know that he didn't like mayonnaise and didn't want any on his sandwich.

The boys were playing basketball outside, and June was watching. She saw Eddie again bully poor Beaver. Then something must have snapped because the next thing we see is June slathering mayonnaise onto Eddie's sandwich.

This subversive moment may have tugged June back toward something more like the real, undomesticated June.

This makes me think about worship. Worship is like spreading mayonnaise on Eddie Haskell's sandwich. It is a subversive act because it reminds us that it is not North American sensibility that defines us but God, the Creator of the Universe. Worship is subversive because it is done in the company of all sorts of people and so creates a deeper awareness of the value of human difference. It is subversive because it takes place within the congregation, that place from which we have the strength to resist the urgent voice of our culture.

The larger culture wants us to define ourselves by the dress we wear, the car we drive, our house, neighborhood, haircut, politics, behavior and clean bathroom, all of which pass for good living in the United States. The culture sounds like Eddie Haskell telling June how pretty she looks, and isn't that a new dress, and how about some more sandwiches? But no mayonnaise, please. And I feel the need to dip my knife into the Hellmans. I feel the need to worship. Whether we find ourselves becoming Ward or June, Wally or the Beaver or even Eddie Haskell, let's stop and worship. An act of sublime subversion helps us remember who we are. It helps us remember who we are meant to be. It restores us to our right minds.

And who knows? We may even become a little less domesticated. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Health services come full circle

I was thrilled to see *The Mennonite* focus on health care (March 1). My working career included more than 30 years at Greencroft Retirement Communities, a Mennonite-sponsored organization in Goshen Ind. The creation of Greencroft in 1962 benefited from the involvement of two Mennonite denominations as well as the local ecumenical community. Greencroft was initially sponsored by Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM).

Trends in the nation that exposed health providers to greater litigation led various denominations to take steps to protect their churches from potential liability. The same happened in the former Mennonite Church.

In the early 1980s, Greencroft and some 20 other sponsored health organizations were "cut loose" from a direct connection to the church (as correctly stated in the editorial). The institutions also wanted more autonomy.

At the same time this was going on with MBM-sponsored organizations, the mental-health organization's relationship with Mennonite Central Committee was being reviewed. This group was already a somewhat autonomous body, but it, too, was facing being cut loose. When faced with the issue of finding new sponsorship, the Greencroft board desired to remain connected with the broader church, beyond its relationship with local congregations.

As a result of these developments, several of us met, and eventually Mennonite Health Services (MHS) was born. That organization served us well for the next nearly 15 years. In recent years and with the evolving of Mennonite Church USA, a spark was kindled, resulting in today's MHS Alliance, now relating to more than 70 Mennonite health-related organizations and successfully building a relationship with Mennonite Church USA.

Although I am retired from administrative work, I am not retired from life. I am delighted to see us come full circle and to see Mennonite Church USA reclaim its rightful role as well as forging a new and mature alliance together with its health institutions.

Thanks to the leadership of Mennonite Church USA and MHS Alliance for revisiting this critical issue. Courage and grace to all as we address every spiritual and human need through the community of faith.*—Gene E. Yoder, Livingston, Texas*

A critical calamity

I just read Everett J. Thomas' editorial on the extraordinarily pressing issue of health care in America ("This Healing Thing," March 1) and want to commend the insightful remark of getting "specific about this healing thing ... and change our country again."

Mennonite leadership is definitely needed again, for we are theologically steeped in Christ's compassion and must be the prophetic voice "crying in the wilderness" on this critical, societal calamity. Thanks so much for this visionary voice and faithfulness in nudging the church toward this responsibility.*—Don Metzler, Elkhart, Ind.*

A denomination of table groups?

In the report of the Constituency Leaders Council meeting ("Table Groups Practice for Charlotte 2005," April 5), my attention was drawn to the comment, "One time-saving device is to limit time at the microphone and have each table discern who should go to the mike."

What is the problem that causes the need for a time-saving device? The assembly begins on Monday and concludes on Saturday. During this week there should be adequate time for delegates to have access to the mike if they have ideas or concerns to express either to the delegate body or denominational agencies.

It appears to me that business meetings at our conventions are becoming shorter, with less and less time given to delegate discussion. If delegates do not have the time to listen to one another, then perhaps they should not consent to be delegates.

The other concern is the increasing voice this proposal gives to table groups at the convention. Mennonite Church USA is a denomination of congregations and conferences, not of table groups.

I do not want delegates from our church or conference to be subject to the voice of their particular table group in order to have access to the mike. I think this runs counter to discernment centered on

IN THIS ISSUE

May 8 this year is Christian Family Sunday in Mennonite Church USA. We are also in the midst of graduation season. Those facts were in our mind as we decided to publish our cover story (page 8) about identical twins Abigail (Abby) and Rebekah (Bekah) Trollinger, who attended and graduated from two of our Mennonite colleges. Their story is an affirmation of a Mennonite family and of Mennonite education. Families—and our church family—includes single adults, a group often neglected by the church. Jeannette Buller, who is single, looks at the confusing world of dating (page 12), asks questions and offers some comments worthy of our attention. Ken Yoder (page 14) reflects on growing up Mennonite and dealing with distractions, while D. Lowell Nissley (page 16) tackles one of the oldest questions humankind has faced: Where is God in times of distress? This question is surely on the minds of the people of Colombia that Tim Nafziger writes about (page 18). May we find God's peace in our families and our church.*—Editors* congregations and conferences. I am concerned that such policies may serve more to stifle fruitful discussion that contributes to effective discernment.—*Marvin Zehr, Newton, Kan.*

Bumper sticker suggestion

In his Speaking Out column (April 5), Dave Alleman is "looking for a biblical bumper sticker" alternative to the common "God Bless America." Here is my suggestion: God bless America with the blessing of Acts 3:26.—*Ben Kenagy, Albany, Ore.*

MCC does start churches

Re Ross L. Bender's letter ("Damascus Road a Bad Idea," March 15): Bender makes some rather strong statements about Mennonite Central Committee and its workers. I wonder how many churches Bender has started. I wonder how many people he has helped discover who Jesus is that resulted in them making a decision to follow Christ? I also wonder how he knows that MCCers do not start churches?

Doesn't he know that MCCers started the first Mennonite church in Taiwan? Doesn't he know that MCCers were the first people in Japan to begin an Anabaptist Christian witness in Japan? Doesn't he know that when MCC discontinued its work in Hong Kong, one of the MCCers remained to nurture the young people who had been part of the MCC Learning Center? Doesn't he know that the Korean War orphans were so deeply touched by the Christian ministry of the MCCers that they requested an Anabaptist Mennonite Church be started in South Korea?

"MCCers wouldn't know how to start a church," Bender said. Wake up, man!—*Peter Kehler, Abbotsford, B.C., former missionary in Taiwan*

No compromise with poison

I am concerned that a nation that was founded upon the principles set forth in the Bible—and at one time considered it the Word of God—has gotten so far away from its teachings that I wonder if we could still be considered a Christian nation. Our monetary prosperity has caused us to place money as our God. We also no longer have any sense of morals as outlined in the Scriptures. About 10 years ago, a former pastor of mine wrote an article on the tolerance of immorality in the churches.

"We forget that intolerance is the real hallmark of truth and integrity," he wrote. "The reliable pharmacist is intolerant of incorrect prescriptions. The physicist is intolerant of error in equations. The engineer is intolerant of substandard materials. There is no compromise with poison, no intelligent way to appease error. However, when it comes to following Christ, the church seems to vacillate and become tolerant of the standards of the culture around us. We forget that we serve a holy God and are called to be a holy people."

I think it's time for the church to stand up for morality as it is taught in God's Word.—*Paul V. Springer, Fisher, Ill.*

Call Christians to peace

Thank you, Karl McKinney, for speaking the truth about what it means to declare our allegiance to Christ ("For Whom Do We Fight?" April 19). McKinney asks how one can be a follower of Jesus while fighting for the safety and self-interest of our nation. Equally perplexing is what makes a Christian support and bless the actions of those who do fight? My hope and prayer is that as the Mennonite church becomes more "missional" there will be a renewed call for Christians to follow Jesus' way of peace and reject the warfare and weapons of this world.—*Shari Nyles, Fleetwood, Pa.*

High school tragedy, government propaganda

Thanks to Bruce D. Martin for sharing his touching, close-up awareness of the Red River High School tragedy ("They Are All Our Children," April 19). Thanks also to Gordon Houser for alerting us to the government's "propaganda" TV news (Mediaculture, April 19).—*Wilma Shank, Goshen, Ind.*

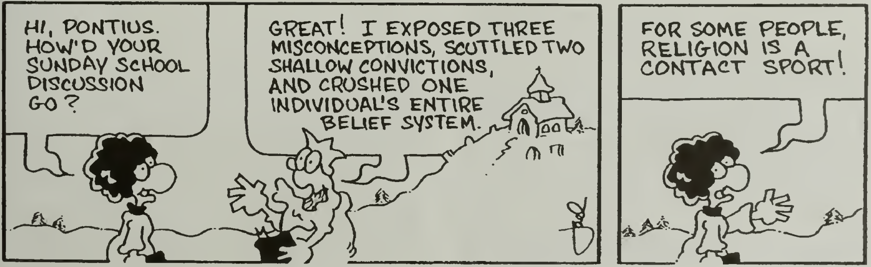
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Because of Pope John Paul II, the Roman Catholic Church

- ○ is more friendly toward Anabaptists (49%)
- ○ is less friendly toward Anabaptists (7%)
- ○ No change (19%)
- ○ Not sure (26%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


HI, PONTIUS. HOW'D YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL DISCUSSION GO?
GREAT! I EXPOSED THREE MISCONCEPTIONS, SCUTTLED TWO SHALLOW CONVICTIONS, AND CRUSHED ONE INDIVIDUAL'S ENTIRE BELIEF SYSTEM.
FOR SOME PEOPLE, RELIGION IS A CONTACT SPORT!

IN BRIEF

Raleigh named outstanding alumnus

Greg Raleigh of Hesston, Kan., will receive the Outstanding Alumnus Award for 2005 on May 21 from the Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) Alumni Association. Raleigh graduated from Bethel in 1984 in physical education and health. He has taught math and coached basketball, football and track. He is president and founder of the Mid-America Youth Basketball program for the Newton-Wichita area. MAYB is a national organization, now in its 12th year, that hosted more than 180 tournaments in 23 states in 2004.—*Bethel College*

Faith and behavior

According to *Harper's* (April), 35 percent of born-again Christians in the United States have been divorced, the same percent as other Americans. The chances that the divorce of a born-again Christian happened after he or she accepted Christ are 9 in 10. It is estimated that in 1995, 2.5 million young Christians pledged to wait until marriage to have sex but that only 12 percent kept that pledge. —*The Christian Century*

Vietnamese Mennonite leaders' appeal denied

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—The prison sentences of Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang and Evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach were upheld by a superior court here on April 12.

Mrs. Le Thi Phu Dung, wife of Pastor Quang, and Thach's father were the only family members permitted to enter the courthouse. The appeal hearing lasted just over two hours.

More than 200 people gathered in the street outside the court to demonstrate their support for the Mennonite leaders. These included leaders of the Vietnam Evangelical Fellowship, a house church association to which Quang had given legal help, and Mennonite church leaders, many of whom were ethnic minorities who came from the Central Highlands.

Four other Mennonite leaders were sentenced to prison in November 2004 for the same incident. Three men have completed their terms and have been released. Ms. Le Thi Hong Lien, the sole woman, is suffering from severe mental illness and has been transferred to a mental hospital.

Vietnam regularly announces general amnesties for prisoners three times yearly. Unless granted amnesty, Pastor Quang could be imprisoned until June 2007. Thach would be released in March 2006.—*Mennonite World Conference*

William Stauffer, longtime pastor, dies at 95

SUGARCREEK, Ohio—William H. Stauffer, 95, of Fiat, Ohio, died March 7.

Born March 2, 1910, to William G. and Vena Stauffer, Stauffer was married on July 21, 1935, to Esther Baldwin Stauffer, who preceded him in death on May 6, 1997. Two sons and their families survive: Bruce and Suzanne Stauffer of Fiat and Bill and Brenda Stauffer of Sunbury, Ohio.

A graduate of Bluffton (Ohio) College in 1932 and of Oberlin Graduate School of Theology in 1935, Bill served as a minister in Ohio for almost 60 years. He was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from Bluffton in 1997.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Jenna Stoltzfus

The legacy of MCC quilts sent to Europe

A new quilt exhibit celebrates the legacy of Mennonite Central Committee quilts sent to Europe after World War II. It accompanies a new book from Good Books, *Passing on the Comfort: The War, the Quilts and the Women Who Made a Difference*, which tells the story of the quilts and the brave woman who used them to shelter refugees.—*MCC News Service*

Hymn Sing for Peace addresses Washington

Cindy Lapp, pastor at Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, with help from her son Elijah, leads singers April 9 across from the White House at the eighth annual Hymn Sing for Peace. This year's event drew about 60 participants and was sponsored for the first time by the Anabaptist Peace Center—Washington DC.—*Keith Swartzendruber*

Goshen alum solves Bach's music puzzle

GOSHEN, Ind.—Bradley Lehman, a 1986 Goshen College graduate, has solved the centuries-old mystery of what appeared to be an arbitrarily scribbled design on an original copy of one of J.S. Bach's compositions. The results have significant ramifications for the world of music history, performance, theory and instrument building.

Lehman's research is available in full detail in the February and May issues of *Early Music*, a journal published by Oxford University Press. He is now recording a CD of organ music on Goshen College's newly installed pipe organ, dedicated May 1, which is tuned with the "Bach/Lehman 1722" temperament.

Lehman, who now lives in Dayton, Va., was primed to unlock the puzzle of Bach's keyboard tuning—a classic problem in music research related to Bach for the past century—since he majored in mathematics and music. He needed both disciplines and also drew on his three graduate degrees from the University of Michigan to understand the music theory problem as well as envision a solution.

Lehman's research is available in the online version of the journal at em.oupjournals.org. He has also created a personal Web site with extensive information about his findings at www.larips.com. *—Goshen College*

'Sweat and Tears' week at Bluffton

BLUFFTON, Ohio—Several organizations at Bluffton University collaborated to present Social Justice Week on Bluffton's campus April 4-8 under the theme "Sweat and Tears" and focused on sweatshop labor around the world.

Events included a prayer gathering and the viewing of "Stolen Childhoods," a documentary on child labor. Lynn Miller spoke on ethical investing, while Sally Weaver Sommer, interim academic dean and professor of economics, and Jim Harder, vice president for institutional planning and special assistant to the president and professor of economics, presented the economics behind sweatshops. The week concluded with a worship service.

The highlight of the week was "Sweatshop Theater," a daily event in which student and staff volunteers participated in a mock sweatshop in the dining hall. The volunteers sat among the students as pseudo-sweatshop workers during meals to demonstrate what an actual sweatshop is like.*—Bluffton University*

Bethel selects Sawatsky for achievement

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—The Awards Committee of the Bethel College Alumni Association has selected Rodney J. Sawatsky to receive the 2005 Distinguished Achievement Award. The award will be presented posthumously. Sawatsky died Nov. 27, 2004, at age 60 from complications of a brain tumor.

Sawatsky's wife, Lorna Ewert Sawatsky, plans to attend the annual Alumni Banquet on May 21 to accept the award.

Most recently, Sawatsky was president of Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., which is affiliated with the Brethren in Christ. He held that role for 10 years, retiring in June 2004, at which time he and his wife, both native Canadians, moved to Waterloo, Ont., to be closer to their family. In addition to his wife, Sawatsky is survived by three daughters—Tanya, Lisa and Katherine Sawatsky—who all live in Canada.

Rodney J. Sawatsky

Rod Sawatsky was born in Manitoba, attended Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now part of Canadian Mennonite University), Winnipeg, and earned a bachelor's degree in social sciences from Bethel in 1965. He has a master's degree in American history from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree and Ph.D. in American religious history from Princeton University.*—Bethel College*

eminarians help raise the roof

Vhen Joel Miller preached a sermon as an assignment for a class t Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., he did ot expect it to result in raising a roof. But, he says, working on a labitat for Humanity home-building project with others in the eminary community and surrounding neighborhood has been n important part of his seminary education. Pictured are Virgil laassen (back to camera), retired director of business and inance at AMBS; an unidentified Habitat volunteer and Miller. *—Mary E. Klassen*

Suspicious minds challenge church in Ukraine

WINNIPEG—Christianity and the church have a decades-long record of suspicion among the people of Ukraine. This residual wariness, left over from old political ideologies and an affinity for witchcraft, persists and frustrates the evangelism efforts of foreign and local Christian church leaders alike, says Cliff Dueck, who with his wife, Natasha, represent Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness in Ukraine.

As the Ukrainian free market economy develops, pastors must deal with declining contributions from the West and a lack of support in their ministry efforts from parishioners. But biggest among the challenges is trying to forge relationships with distrustful local residents who perpetrate myths and discourage children and youth from attending church-related events.

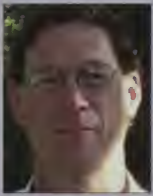
"A fair number of Ukrainians practice magic, and children and youth often consider rituals involving the calling of evil spirits an interesting pastime," reports Dueck. "North Americans often associate these activities with Africa and tribal traditions, but there is enough of it in Ukraine to plague the church and its followers."*—Mennonite Church Canada Witness, Mennonite Mission Network*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

EMU peace program turns 10

Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., plans to change the name of its peace program to the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding on June 4 as part of the 10th anniversary celebration of what has been known as the Conflict Transformation Program. In its first decade the program has seen more than 1,500 people from 83 countries take one or more of its courses. For more information, phone 540-432-4491 or visit www.emu.edu/ctp. *—Bonnie Price Lofton*



Horst named MPN director of operations

Kurt Horst, Somerset, Pa., has been appointed director of operations for Mennonite Publishing Network and began his duties April 11. Horst will also continue as conference minister in Allegheny Mennonite Conference; each role is half-time. As director of operations, Horst supervises administrative services based in Scottdale, Pa., and serves on the management team. He will play a key role in putting together a plan to move the Scottdale-based programs when the building is sold.*—MPN*

Abby (left) and Bekah in kindergarten at age 5

Twins Abigail and Rebekah Trollinger prepare for lives of faith and service.

Abby (left) and Bekah at Abby's graduation from Goshen

Strong minds, tender hearts

by Leslie Homer-Cattell

When identical twins Abigail and Rebekah Trollinger looked at colleges, they were in agreement. It was time to go their separate ways. "We went to a small high school and hung around the same people. I wanted a chance to be an individual," says Abby. "We have a good relationship, but there is always a level of competition because other people always compare twins."

"We depended on each other a lot," Bekah says. "We wanted to spend some time apart to see what happened to each of us on our own."

The search is on: While they wanted to end up at different colleges, the sisters were both drawn to Mennonite education. "We weren't Mennonite before we moved to Bluffton [Ohio]," says Bekah. "But we checked out First Mennonite, and it fit our whole family perfectly with its emphasis on peace, justice and social responsibility. And the youth group was really exciting. Going to a Mennonite college seemed to fulfill what I wanted from the get-go."

"We picked small liberal arts colleges and went online to read about their mission statements, activities and academics," says Abby. "We realized we liked Mennonite colleges as much or more than the others."

Gayle and Bill Trollinger encouraged their daughters' interest in Mennonite schools. As director of the Education Department at Bluffton College, Gayle is eligible for half tuition credit for children attending Mennonite colleges. And she says she and Bill—a professor of history at the University of Dayton—were academically well prepared as graduates of small church-related colleges.

"In addition to strong relationships with peers," says Gayle, "we also wanted them to have relationships with faculty members who could help as they decided which discipline to choose and how to infuse their beliefs about peace and justice into that. We knew peers alone wouldn't do that in the same way."

In their junior year, the twins began visiting colleges. They went to Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., and Goshen (Ind.) College. They also considered Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University and Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

In addition to strong relationships with peers, we also wanted them to have relationships with faculty members who could help as they decided which discipline to choose and how to infuse their beliefs about peace and justice into that.

—Gayle Trollinger

Continued on page 10

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Bekah says she fell in love with Bethel on her first visit. “I went to an international meal, and then we went swing dancing. The people were really friendly—I loved the social life,” she says. “I also loved how flat and sunny Kansas is. The sky looks just enormous, and Bethel has a gorgeous campus. When Dad asked what we thought, I said I could be happy there.”

Goshen was Abby’s first choice. “I had a really good time when we visited,” she says. “We did fun, low-key ‘college’ things like going to The Brew—a coffee shop—and Steak and Shake. It also seemed like the school would emphasize what I wanted to do in terms of peace, justice and academics.”

A good fit: Looking back now more than four years later, Abby and Bekah agree the schools they chose were a good fit. Each discovered her unique path and course of study. “My history professors were amazing,” says Abby. “History of Utopian Thought was such an important class for me. I learned how to write papers, and we really debated things.”

“Abby was part of a first-year colloquium,” says professor of history John D. Roth. “It was a group of bright, energetic and gifted students who came to appreciate each other although they are very different. Their friendships have sustained themselves in a unique way. At least once a year we met at my place for a cookout and we had a retreat in April as they were graduating to reflect back and focus on the future.

SST taught me that frightening and unknown situations can end up being really good experiences.—Abby Trollinger

“Abby was an important part of that class. She is sensitive to other people’s perspectives and at the same time independent-minded. She listens carefully but is able to express a counter-perspective in an appropriate way.” Talking about the Bible and matters of faith also fascinated Abby. She decided to major in both history and Bible/religion.

“A double major is a lot of work,” says Jo-Ann Brant, who chairs Goshen’s department of Bible/religion and philosophy. “But Abby rises to challenges and partakes in everything in an energetic way. She made sure she met expectations and then moved beyond her own level of competency.”

Abby says Goshen’s Study Service Term (SST) was also a growing experience. “I taught English at Sichuan Normal University,” she says. “It was amazing. SST taught me that frightening and unknown situations can end up being really good experiences.”

Meanwhile, Bekah was finding her own way in Kansas. “Bethel is a Mennonite school, but it has a pretty diverse student body—people come from Florida, Texas, Hawaii. … It makes for a really unique community,” says Bekah. “Professors like Ami Regier and Paul Lewis had an incredible passion for whatever we were reading and talking about,” she says. “Those weren’t just dusty books. What we were learning had relevance to our lives. Every semester at Bethel I had a class that totally blew my mind and made me rethink some important things.”

“Bekah was a key class member,” says associate professor of English Ami Regier. “She didn’t want a faculty member to authoritatively tackle a subject; she also wanted to hear others’ points of view.”

Bekah says one of her best memories is writing a 10- to 12-page paper for her Religion and Human Identity class. “Megan Bartel and I worked really hard for a few days, then stayed up the last night and printed off our papers at 1 a.m.,” she says. “We went to Newell’s—a local truck stop—and got eggs and coffee. Our plan was to edit our papers but instead we talked for two hours about religion and faith. Talking about ideas is what I’ll remember most.”

Individual growth, common core: Abby and Bekah graduated last spring. Although they say being apart wasn’t easy, they grew and learned who they are as individuals. “It was hard; we’d email and talk on the phone a lot. But it was good, too; people knew me for me,” says Abby. “And we had different experiences coming into who we are and finding out what we love.”

“When I started, I was really excited about being on my own, having new friends and doing all this fun stuff,” says Bekah. “Over four years I have become a more disciplined student. Bethel’s helped me decide that something I would love to do is teach at the college level.”

“Both schools provided us with really amazing professors and support that made us love what we were doing academically,” says Abby. “During my senior seminar I talked as many times as I could to my professors. That's what really made an impact on my life."

Now the twins are moving on. Bekah left for India last August to volunteer with Serving And Learning Together (SALT). Last fall, Abby headed to San Francisco for a year of voluntary service with Global Exchange, an international human rights organization.

Brant believes putting higher education in the context of Christian faith is an important distinctive of Mennonite education. While many schools teach analytical thinking, she says few insist that students grapple with subjects in terms of faith.

Roth agrees. "We want to help our students become skilled, equipped and rooted in the best of the liberal arts tradition," he says, "but we don't just want them to be bright. We want them to see the interconnectedness of our faith and the world and their gifts as inevitably linked to a life of service. The thing I want to cultivate in myself and students is the capacity to have sharp minds and tender hearts."

When students understand college as a time of retreat, reflection and preparation supported by the church, Brant says, their work as graduates becomes part of the work of the church.

Gayle Trollinger also sees a college-church connection. "Mennonite colleges are committed to looking at the whole world," she says. "Through their college experiences, Bekah and Abby have seen how they can be instruments to bring God's kingdom to the world."

"Talking to people challenged me," says Abby, "and helped me figure out my faith and where I want to go with my life. I feel like I have some mentors I will hopefully keep in touch with for the rest of my life."

"I'm going to stay active in the Mennonite Church as I grow older," says Bekah. "The values a lot of Mennonite churches hold are really important to me. And I've made some friends I'm going to hang on to for the rest of my life. It's exciting." TM

Leslie Homer-Cattell lives in Honey Brook, Pa.

Update: *Bill has been appointed vice president of academic affairs/academic dean at Bluffton (Ohio) University. He will leave the University of Dayton in June to begin at Bluffton July 1. Bekah has been accepted at Indiana University for graduate studies in English and will begin this fall. Abby will stay a second year at Global Exchange in San Francisco doing voluntary service.*

Bekah (left) and Abby in 2004

The values a lot of Mennonite churches hold are really important to me. And I've made some friends I'm going to hang on to for the rest of my life.—Bekah Trollinger

Many singles find themselves mired in self-doubt with little guidance or help from the church.

Dating

by Jeannette S. Buller

How you read the title of this article may depend on your age. The younger crowd may see "rules" as a verb and read it as, "Dating is the best!" And in fact they're having a lot of fun doing it. For them, dating is about meeting people and having fun.

Others will read it in the more traditional way and may wonder how to play the dating game and what the rules are for Christians in the 21st century. As we age, the dating game focuses more on finding a lifelong mate, which adds an air of seriousness to the adventure.

For most single people the game is confusing at best. The rules seem to change depending on our age, the era we're in and the church we're attending. Besides the shifting rules in our culture, the church seems to have its own set of rules, sometimes related to Scripture but often based on understandings and assumptions handed down through the generations.

For the most part the church does little to help singles clarify the rules or discern healthy guidelines for conduct. Most rules are assumed or hinted at in passing, yet when one is broken the rule-breaker is chastised or looked down on. Other churches are clearer about the rules and leave no room for discussion at all.

Sometimes the dating game feels like the church rummage sale where we are perusing the merchandise, buying cheap or tossing when used. Singles may also feel like we are sitting on a row of tables being assessed for suitability. Neither is a comfortable place to be when we want to live with integrity in relationships.

Books such as *I Kissed Dating Good-bye* question the entire dating scene in America and urge us to do it differently. But most of us find that we're living in a culture where people, Christians included, aren't trying to radically rewrite the process. We're just trying to play the game in a way that honors God and each other.

Once I agreed to meet a man for lunch upon a referral from a friend. We began by exchanging a few emails, followed by a couple of phone calls, which seemed to go well. The lunch discussion included lively conversation and a lot of laughs. Subsequently I emailed him to thank him for the lunch, and he returned with an enthusiastic "No, thank YOU!" I again responded via email—and never heard from him again.

This scenario repeats itself in many variations among my friends, and we are left wondering: Did I do something wrong? Did I break a rule I didn't know about? If so, how can I figure out what it was? Who can I talk to? Many singles find themselves mired in self-doubt with little guidance or help from the church.

Let's look at some possible Christian rules, the questions singles are asking about those rules and how the church might help address these kinds of issues.

The revelation rule: God will bring the person you are to marry into your life and reveal that person to you if you simply go about serving God faithfully.

Comment: By the time a person is in their 30s and beyond, the waiting game is getting old.

Questions: Is it OK to look for a mate? How much initiative do we take in looking for a mate? How much energy do we put into the dating endeavor?

The dress code rule: Dress modestly in a way that is not seductive or enticing to the opposite sex.

Comments: This rule is more geared toward women than men. Plus, styles change over time and vary depending on age; what seems appropriate at 21 can look questionable at 41.

rules

For the most part the church does little to help singles clarify the rules or discern healthy guidelines for conduct.

Questions: How short is too short? How tight is too tight? When does clothing go from attractive (that's OK, right?) to seductive? Who makes that determination?

The initiative rule: Women must not take initiative in the relationship; that's the man's role.

Comment: Our culture also dictates who can do what and when. Today women have much more latitude, but the invisible line is still there.

Questions: When is it OK for a woman to take some initiative? How can women participate in the development of the relationship without seeming to be pushy or aggressive?

The flirting/sensuality rule: A person should not flirt or lead someone to believe they are interested if they're just doing it for fun and are not serious about starting a romantic relationship.

Comments: Actions that attract the opposite sex are part of the game and are enjoyed until someone gets hurt. When you're just getting to know someone, flirting is often a way to find out whether or not you're interested in starting a romantic relationship with them; intentions aren't always certain beforehand.

Questions: When is it OK just to have fun without evaluating every move you make? Where does the responsibility lie in misinterpreting signals?

The equally yoked rule: The person you're dating must be a Christian.

Comment: In this and many of the other rules, having a trusted, grounded confidant to process with is essential.

Questions: To what extent should the person have the same belief system (denominational, political, cultural) simply to date them? What values are non-negotiable to consider before marriage? How does one discern those values in others? Should you even date someone you don't feel is mate-material? How clear should one be on intention?

The location rule: The place to look for a compatible, godly mate is in the church and at church functions.

Comment: Increasingly the Internet will be where people connect beyond their circle of friends.

Questions: What other places and in what ways is it OK to look for a potential mate? What are the inherent dangers of looking beyond the four walls of the church? In what ways can churches assist singles in meeting other single Christians?

The physical rule: The Bible seems clear that sexual intercourse is reserved for marriage.

Comment: With our permissive society, singles need encouragement to stay within their moral decisions.

Questions: Before marriage, what physical interaction is OK and when? To what extent does it depend on the people involved, the nature of the relationship or the age of the people?

The divorce status rule: A divorced person is forever undatable, and marriage to a divorced person is forbidden.

Comment: The older we are, the more we find that the percentage of divorced singles increases and the never-married options are limited.

Questions: To what extent, if any, does being undatable depend on the circumstances of the divorce? How many years should a divorced person wait to start dating? What can a divorced person do to address the issues of the divorce and be able to engage in a healthy relationship at a future time? What should someone dating a divorced person be aware of?

This article raises more questions than it answers, but too often we don't find the right answers because we don't ask the right questions or even take time to explore the assumptions that guide our conduct.

The answers to most of these questions are not explicit in Scripture. Singles find answers from the many influences around them and usually come up with their own version of dating rules, which shift with time and experience.

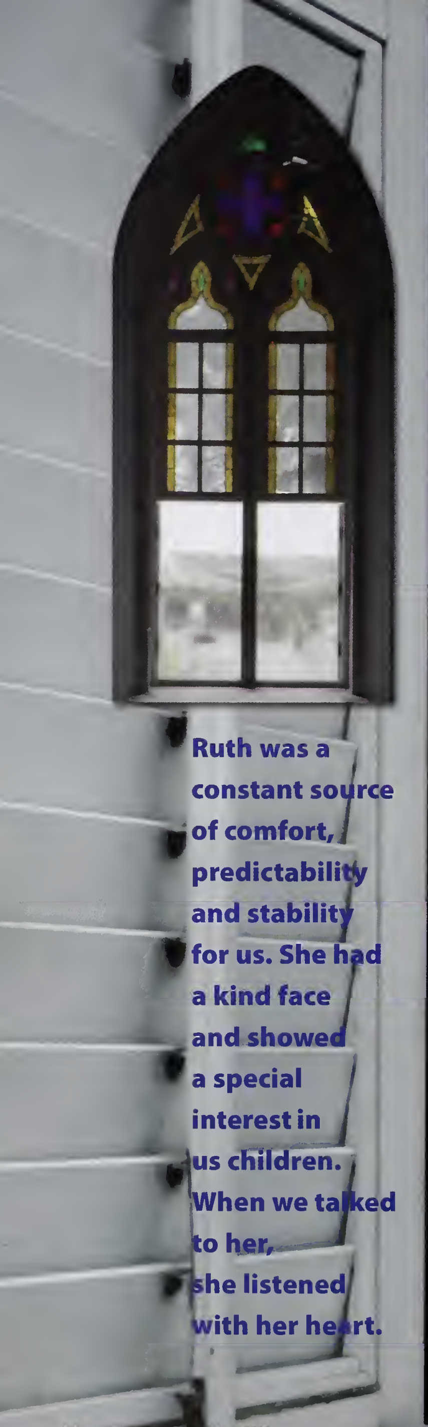
For young people still at home, parents may want to spend some time discussing these issues with their teenagers. For adults, the church should provide a time and place for open discussion of these questions and the many related questions singles have as they begin dating and engage the process of looking for a lifelong partner.

Jeannette S. Buller is a single, ordained minister with Mennonite Church USA. She attends Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix, Ariz.

Singles find answers from the many influences around them and usually come up with their own version of dating rules, which shift with time and experience.

Both sides of the

by Ken Yoder



They say that barking dogs don't bite, but I know for a fact that barking dogs can impact your spiritual development, especially those dogs that get started and can't get stopped barking.

Growing up Mennonite in Knoxville, Tenn., in the 1950s meant that if the church doors were open, you were there. You went early and stayed late. And it wasn't necessarily a burden because you could run up and down the sidewalk and meet your friends. Wednesday night prayer meetings were without a doubt the best, because while the adults had prayer meeting, the kids got to go to the basement for children's meeting with Ruth Byler.

What a treat that was! Ruth was a constant source of comfort, predictability and stability for us. She had a kind face and showed a special interest in us children. When we talked to her, she listened with her heart. She loved us. I don't recall her ever saying it out loud to us, but kids knew. She was there for us, and that was special. I wonder if it was a burden to her always to be with the kids rather than the adults. Maybe she preferred it that way.

Children in Knoxville were appreciated. We had Bible school with those wonderful Herald Press Bible school materials. I loved learning about Little Wang Fu of China and couldn't wait until next year when I could make the Jerusalem house like my brother did this year. We were taught the Beatitudes and other verses, and if we could say them correctly, we got a prize. Man, I worked on that.

Ruth was a constant source of comfort, predictability and stability for us. She had a kind face and showed a special interest in us children. When we talked to her, she listened with her heart.

window

Growing up Mennonite in Knoxville, Tenn.

But Sunday nights—oh my, that was a trial. Nothing for kids except to sit, and sitting was hard to do. The wooden folding chairs were better than the slat benches, which hurt you if you sat on them too long. We weren't long on comfort in those days. You had to be stout of constitution to tolerate Sunday night at the Knoxville Mennonite Mission.

In spite of the seating arrangements, we had pretty good a capella singing in Knoxville, as small a group as we were, except we sang so slowly. Some of the songs, such as "Oh Why Not Tonight" or "Just As I Am" took forever to sing. Not only did the songs make me nervous, I had the added concern that the Lord would return before we finished.

Mostly I remember being bored. It was either be bored to death or be scared to death if you listened. I chose boredom to keep the anxiety at bay. If you scooted around too much, your mother pinched your leg and hung on like a broody hen protecting her eggs. One of the other kids might get restless and instead of pinching him his mother picked him up and hauled him outside. We knew what happened next, and we heard him wail, "Not too hard, Mama."

To keep from being walloped or pinched, I entertained myself. Like any good Mennonite church, we had a clock front and center, and that helped me know how long I could hold my breath. Who knew when your life might depend on your ability to hold your breath for a long time? The Russians might come to take you away because you believed in God and you could hide and not breathe while they looked for you. Or the government might want to drown you in a vat of water because of your faith, and if you could hold your breath a long time, maybe they would give up because they thought you were dead already. It was important to be ready. *Martyrs' Mirror* taught me to be ready.

Another thing to do was lean your head back, gaze up at the tongue-and-groove ceiling boards and relax your eyes. If you did it just right, then the ceiling got three-dimensional and seemed like another universe. That took concentration and time but was preferable to learning about the Great Tribulation and the burning sea of fire that will never go out.

On some hot summer evenings, none of these tactics worked. We didn't have air conditioning but did have fans from the funeral home, and that helped. With the windows open, a breath of air might come in. But so did the noise. Especially from a little white dog across the street. That dog barked the entire time, the same monotonous yip, yip, yip without surcease for the entire service.

I know this was an unholy thought, but I wanted to kill that dog. I wanted at least to kick it. Anything to make it stop. That incessant yip, yip, yip was like Chinese torture on University Avenue, constant as a drop of water on the head of a restrained prisoner. It seemed my personal torment, because I don't know that anybody else was affected by it as much as I was. How could they stand it?

Brother Ezra Good was so glad to see us in church on a Sunday evening, bless his heart. I liked Brother Ezra, but it didn't make a lot of sense when he asked rhetorically, "Where else would you want to be on a Sunday evening than here with God's people?" Several options came to mind, especially when that miserable dog got to yipping.

There you have it? Maybe to have the goodness of being with God's people, you have to contend with the distractions that come from both sides of the window.

Ken Yoder is a member of Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Saying the blessing

by Walt McDonald

I can't say anything new to children
on their own. They need my blessing
as I wanted my own father's love,
but nothing more—no roof

or weekly allowance, no easy advice.
I'd say it all again, abridged
and edited, if they'd let me,
convinced the old songs are the best—

the thunder of prairie rain,
the sober mourning of doves,
the joy of work in the wings
of hummingbirds, the holy Psalms.

Walt McDonald lives in Lubbock, Texas. This poem was first published in Clockwatch Review.

Where is God

by D. Lowell Nissley

A heavy-set man was having a difficult time on the stairs of the 44th floor of the World Trade Center. Another man stopped to help him. "My legs just won't work," said the heavy man. "Forget about your legs, just sit on your butt and slide from step to step," said the other man. A fireman going up the steps insisted that the helper leave immediately and get out of the building. He refused to abandon the heavy man. Neither of them escaped. Where was God on those steps on 9-11-01?

A couple named Olson from Norway were on vacation in Thailand. Their 4-year-old son was having a great time in the pool of the hotel where they were staying. After the first tsunami wave struck, the son grabbed his father and said "Daddy, I'm scared." After the second wave, the Olsons saw their son float away from them on the wave. Where was God?

These are not times for trite, simplistic answers. These questions emerge from troubled souls and deserve an honest hearing. "God, where are you?" has confronted humankind for centuries. It began in the Garden of Eden, though there the question was reversed. God said, "Adam, where are you?" But Adam didn't want to know where God was—because of what he had just done, Adam did not want to see God at the moment.

Where is God in times of distress? He is right where he has always been—right beside you.

Cain didn't want to know either after he killed his brother Abel. Both Adam and his son, Cain, were not seeking God, but he was seeking them. And thus it has always been.

Where is God when you need him?" The answer is not complicated. One does not need a doctorate or to be a Mother Teresa to know the answer. To many religions, God is either aloof—somewhere in the back 40 doing his own thing—or is standing over us with a big stick ready to punish.

I read of a man standing in a decimated Mosque in Sumatra amid dozens of dead bodies following the tsunami. The man was obviously in great distress. His business, his home, and his wife and children were all gone. His response: "This is punishment from the gods." Unfortunately, I've heard the same sentiment from the lips of some Christians.

God is not in the punishing business. Jesus spoke to this point (Luke 13:4) when he asked if the 18 people who were killed in Siloam when the tower fell were worse sinners than the ones who were not killed. We, too, can be asked the same question: Were the people in Sarasota less sinners than those in Punta Gorda or Arcadia or Wauchula when Hurricane Charlie struck? Were the skiers killed in early February in Colorado worse sinners than those skiers who escaped the avalanche? Were the people swallowed up in their homes by mudslides in California worse than the people a block away who survived? There are natural laws in this world that make the planet run, and sometimes we get in the way. If I jump off the skyway bridge, I will get wet. God will not suspend the law of gravity because I'm a Christian.

For the Christian to answer is simple—but profound. Where is God in times of distress? He is right where he has always been—right beside you. Sometimes we pray, "Lord come and be with us today." Why do we pray this? We don't need to ask. He is already here. He told us so. The Psalmist asks, "Where can I go to get away from you?" It's like standing in the driveway on a clear day in July and asking the sun to shine. That's what the sun does. It shines.

Better yet, God is within us. Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless—the Holy Spirit will be in you. I read a report from Christian Peacemaker Teams—people who live in hot spots around the world trying to be instruments of peace—about the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. One side of the road was lined with Palestinians with rocks in their hands. The other side of the road was lined with Israeli soldiers with guns in their hands. The air was tense. Any spark could set off great violence from either side. The CPT workers marched down the center of the road acting like clowns. Both groups were so shocked by the sight they laughed at the antics of the clowns, and before long they all dispersed. Where was God? That day God was in a couple of clowns.

hen you need him?

A better question is, What God are we looking for?

Our problem is not, Where is God? Our problem is, What God are we looking for? Sometimes we look for a god driving an ambulance. There is an emergency, and we need him. But how about the times when everything is going fine, when I'm in control? Why then do I need God? Everything is going quite well, thank you.

This is the same sin as Adam and Eve's. They wanted to know everything God knew—and not need him. It was the same sin of arrogance and self-sufficiency that created the fiasco at the Tower of Babel. We reenact that drama most every day of our lives. Someone has said we become the willing, worldly worshipers at the shrine of good times and exciting entertainment, but when things get out of our control, let the sirens sound, let everyone get out of the way, God's coming to bail me out.

Then there are some folks looking for a god with a good portfolio. When my investments are doing well, what do I need God for? I have the means to buy what I want. I can fill my Hummer and vacation wherever I please. But when the NASDAQ falls, God, where are you? But God never leaves us.

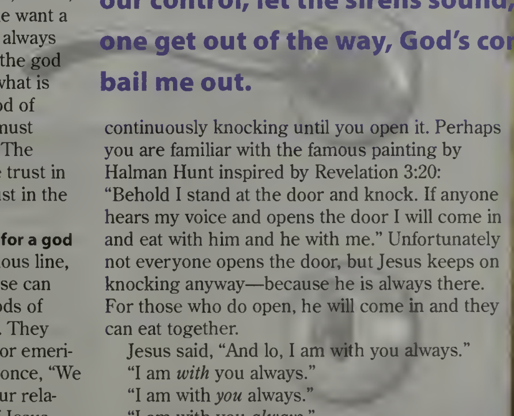
Then there are those looking for a god with a flag. It doesn't matter if they are in Japan, China, the United States, France or Iraq. People want a god with a flag. And the god with a flag always leads them to war. Jesus said to give to the god with a flag what is his, and to our God what is his. Both the god with a flag and the God of Jesus demand total allegiance, and we must choose, because we cannot serve both. The Psalmist knew this (Psalm 20:7): "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

In these days we are tempted to look for a god of vengeance. Archie Bunker had a famous line, "What's wrong with vengeance? How else can you get even?" The reality is that the gods of vengeance corrode the soul like cancer. They destroy from within. Bruce Porter, pastor emeritus from the Church of the Palms, said once, "We cannot choose the gods of revenge in our relationships to others and have the God of Jesus Christ for ourselves."

On July 18, 1918, a black boy was born near the village of Umtata, in the Transkei of South Africa. His name was Nelson Mandella. His father was Principle Councilor to the Acting Paramount Chief of Thembuland. After his father's death, young Nelson became the Paramount Chief's ward, to be groomed to assume high office. Influenced by the cases dealt with in this court, young Nelson aspired to become a lawyer, which he did, and dedicated his life to achieve justice and fairness for his people against the oppressive Apartheid rule in South Africa. Later he was sentenced to jail, where after 27 years in prison on Robben Island he was released on Feb. 11, 1990. On May 10, 1994, he became the first democratic president of South Africa. It was said in those days that if Apartheid ever falls, it would be in a bloodbath. This did not happen because President Mandella did not choose the aid of the gods of violence but the God of love and forgiveness and amnesty to those who had for so long committed outrageous atrocities.

Imagine someone knocking on your door—continuously knocking until you open it. Perhaps you are familiar with the famous painting by Halman Hunt inspired by Revelation 3:20: "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come in and eat with him and he with me." Unfortunately not everyone opens the door, but Jesus keeps on knocking anyway—because he is always there. For those who do open, he will come in and they can eat together.

We become the willing, worldly worshipers at the shrine of good times and exciting entertainment, but when things get out of our control, let the sirens sound, let everyone get out of the way, God's coming to bail me out.



Jesus said, "And lo, I am with you always."
"I am *with* you always."
"I am with *you* always."
"I am with you *always*."
Amen.

D. Lowell Nissley lives in Sarasota, Fla.

A toy boat and a massacre

Tim Nafziger returned in April from three months with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Colombia. For more information, go to www.cptuk.org/tim.html.

I don't often have profound conversations about toy boats over breakfast, as I did with Alfredo (not his real name), a 4-year-old who lives along the Opón River in Colombia, where Christian Peacemaker Teams maintains a presence. Alfredo was playing with a balsa wood boat his father made when someone asked him if the boat was a Piranha, the navy gunboats that patrol the river. Alfredo said no, this was a chalupa, the civilian version.

The week before, on Feb. 21, Luis Eduardo Guerra, a leader of the San José de Apartadó Peace community, his partner and his 11-year-old son were detained by men identified as belonging to the Colombian army. Three days later their bodies were found mutilated in a mass grave. A second community leader and his family were also among the dead. In total, eight members of the peace community were killed, including three children and one teenage girl. Although the army denies involvement, the community has denounced them as responsible for the massacre. A human-rights lawyer and a Catholic priest working with the community have gathered multiple testimonies from community members to back the denunciation.

The San José de Apartadó Peace Community in Urabá was one of the first of dozens of communities that have declared themselves actively neutral as part of the peace community movement that began in Colombia in 1997. These communities declare themselves autonomous and refuse to be involved with any armed group, illegal or legal. This autonomy has come at great cost. In San José de Apartadó, with a population of 3,000 in 28 hamlets, more than 130 people have been murdered by armed groups since their declaration of neutrality.

The massacre comes less than a year after the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights and the Colombian Constitutional Court told the Colombian government to specifically protect the San José community. Luis Eduardo Guerra was one of the people negotiating with the government on how better to do this. The situation is best summed up by Gloria Cuartas, the former mayor of Apartadó, who told the Associated Press, "The army in Urabá has no moral authority to defend and protect the population."

This explains why the presence of the navy and the army does not make some communities in Colombia feel safe. This is why CPT Colombia is concerned with the presence of armed groups in the Opón, both illegal and legal, and why Alfredo was not playing with his toy Piranha gunboat.

CPT photo

Army and 'illegal' cartel cooperate

The frequent presence of the illegal "gasoline cartel" in the Opón is unsettling for CPT Colombia. The cartel is led and controlled by the paramilitary group AUC-BCB (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, Bloque Central Bolívar), which generates fear in the community with its armed presence.

On the morning of Dec. 22, 2004, CPT workers traveled down the Opón River and encountered soldiers from the Colombian army on the bank of the river in the village Las Bocas de La Colorada. During the visit the CPT workers saw several gasoline cartel motor-canoes pass with gas tanks and empty barrels, and the soldiers did not stop them. The sergeant in charge said he had informed his commander about the situation and was given orders to wait.

At 4:15 p.m., while members of CPT were talking with the Colombian soldiers by the bank of the Opón River in the village Las Bocas de La Colorada, three or four suspected members of the AUC-BCB dressed in civilian clothing and not visibly armed, arrived from upriver. One soldier said, "Here come the paramilitaries." Another soldier said their role is to protect the civilian population and that they didn't want to have problems with the AUC because there could be reprisals against them. The suspected members of the AUC-BCB stopped briefly at the riverbank, exchanged greetings with the soldiers and left downriver.—*CPT Colombia*

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Preparing for Charlotte 2005**

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Puerto Rico Conference may join MC USA

Executive Board, Mission Network plan new office building in Elkhart, Ind.

Although it planned to focus on last-minute details for Charlotte 2005, the Executive Board, meeting April 15-17 in Sioux Falls, S.D., responded to proposals that will affect Mennonite Church USA long after the convention.

Several days before the Executive Board's meeting, Executive Leadership (the new name for staff members who work for the Executive Board) received a letter from Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference leaders announcing that their area conference wishes to explore becoming members of Mennonite Church USA. Delegates took the action during their annual meetings March 10-13. (Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference joined the former Mennonite Church in 1995 but became the only area conference to decline either provisional or full membership in Mennonite Church USA.)

In response to the initiative, the Executive Board invited Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference to send representatives to Charlotte 2005 and to the next Constituency Leaders Council meeting. The Executive Board also agreed to send several representatives in the near future to Puerto Rico to begin the process required for any new conference wishing to join Mennonite Church USA.

A second matter unrelated to Charlotte 2005 focused on a possible new building in Elkhart, Ind., for staff of Mennonite Mission Network and Executive Leadership. The building would be called Great Lakes Mission and Leadership Center.

In response to a feasibility study commissioned in 2004, Mennonite Mission Network reported that it has "approved the concept" of a new facility adjacent to the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary campus on Benham Avenue. The Mission Network board set July 1, 2006, as the date it will "announce full commitment" to the project.

Currently, Elkhart-based staff for both entities rent downtown office space at 500 South Main. Mennonite Mission Network estimates it will cost $3.8 million to rent those offices over the next 15 years. Mission Network leaders also estimate building a new facility near AMBS will cost between $7 and 8 million.

In matters related to this summer's delegate assembly at Charlotte 2005, the Executive Board approved the final—and much shortened—version of the Healthcare Access Statement for consideration by the delegates.

Karl Sommers and Joe Kotva, both members of the commission that has been guiding the statement through the testing process, reported that the commission became so discouraged by the controversy surrounding the statement that they removed everything but its basic theology.

"As the commission reviewed the succession of drafts of the health-care statement," Sommers said, "they noted a clear shift from a more striking prophetic statement to one that some felt was [too] 'watered down.' Consequently … there was general agreement to strip out all of the … specific suggestions about the application of our theology."

There was general agreement to strip out all of the … specific suggestions about the application of our theology [in the Healthcare Access Statement]. —Karl Sommers

Although the Healthcare Access Statement may be the only resolution before the delegates, a significant focus for adults at Charlotte 2005 will be the Wednesday afternoon joint meeting with Mennonite Church Canada delegates. Because there is no agreement about how the two national churches should relate in the future, a special meeting of Mennonite Church Canada's General Board and the Executive Board has been scheduled for Thursday evening during the convention.

In other action, the Executive Board approved two additions to Mennonite Church USA Bylaws and will ask Charlotte 2005 delegates to ratify the new language. The first change recognizes the Governance Council, which is comprised of churchwide agency chairpersons and executive directors, led by the Mennonite Church USA moderator and staffed by the executive director. A second change adds language about *The Mennonite* for the first time and recognizes this magazine as the denominational periodical for Mennonite Church USA. *—Everett J. Thomas*

Everett J. Thomas

Executives feast at Schmeckfest

Mennonite Church USA executives joined other guests at Freeman (S.D.) Academy's 47th annual Schmeckfest. Executive Leadership staff members Laurie L. Oswald (left) and Kenyetta Twine (right) join Mennonite Education Agency's executive director Carlos Romero in a feast of ethnic foods brought to the area by Mennonite immigrants from Europe. The Executive Board met in nearby Sioux Falls April 15-17 so they could participate in Schmeckfest.

Conference call attracts 800 listeners

Mennonite leaders offer resources for 'congregations in a country at war.'

Landis

Last fall, Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Executive Leadership of Mennonite Church USA, felt "a heaviness about peace and justice in our nation," she said April 12 in a conversation about peace.

Through times of prayer and receiving spiritual direction, she came up with "Tools for Our Time: Congregations in a Country at War," a gathering via phone and the Internet to talk about what direction Mennonites should be going.

Landis, who hosted the conversation, said that nearly 800 people either called a toll-free number or joined online to listen as a group of Mennonite leaders talked about the challenges people face who are committed to following Jesus' way of peace.

Speakers included J. Daryl Byler, director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office; Ron Kraybill, associate professor of conflict studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA; David B. Miller, pastor of University Mennonite Church, State College, Pa.; Myron Augsburger, evangelist, church planter, pastor and professor; Carol Rose, former pastor and now co-director of Christian Peacemaker Teams; John D. Roth, professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College, and Pearl Hoover, pastor of Northern Virginia Mennonite Church in Fairfax.

Byler and Kraybill, who have traveled overseas and keep in touch with political trends, pointed to the role of the United States as the world's only superpower and the effect its policies have around the world.

Byler noted that the United States spends more on weapons than the rest of the world combined, consumes three times its share of the world's resources and spends $125 million per day in Iraq.

Kraybill quoted U.S. leaders, including the CIA director, who admit that the war in Iraq has served to recruit terrorists. He said he hears from students all over the world who say, "We were with you after 9-11, but after all the aggression we are suspicious."

Schrag said that a clear witness for Christ is needed. "Other Christians need our witness to Jesus' teachings on peace," he said. Pastors and congregations are dealing with forces within us that oppose the rule of God, he said.

Augsburger, Rose and Miller focused their comments on truthtelling and pastoring.

"The local congregation," Augsburger said, "makes a great contribution to society by living in integrity as committed to the kingdom of Christ. We need to show that we accept what Jesus did, what he said and who he was."

The local congregation makes a great contribution to society by living in integrity as committed to the kingdom of Christ.
—Myron Augsburger

Rose said that to be pastoral "one must be compassionate but not avoid the hard things," whether that involves personal or corporate sin. "The Word of God often demands that we speak words that may not be popular," she said.

Miller, who also works with the Center on Conscience and War, said our society is organized around a common fear. "We lack imagination" and need to find "alternatives to war," he said.

Roth, whose book *Choosing Against War: A Christian View* came out recently, said he has spoken to 50 to 60 congregations in the past couple of years and has been struck by how divided Mennonites are about peace.

"We've been shaped by our society's rhetoric," he said, and our conversations have been co-opted by the red-blue conflict. "We need to cultivate spiritual disciplines that help us refocus our engagement with the world," Roth said.

Hoover said we need to practice respect, humility and connectedness and know why we believe in peace. "Maybe we need fewer words and more peaceful actions," she said.

Landis closed the hour-long conversation with prayer and invited further dialogue. For more information go to www.mennonitechurchusa.org/peace. *—Gordon Houser*

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Couple baptized after 13 years at church

Making a Christian faith commitment in Japan is rarely a quick decision.

Following the funeral of a church member and friend last September, Mayumi Noto told her husband, Hideo, that she wished she could have seen their friend off as a church member herself and not just as an outsider. After 13 years of faithful attendance at Obihiro (Japan) Mennonite Church, the death triggered something in the Notos; they finally realized the extent of their commitment to the church and to Christ and decided it was time to make that commitment public. Together the Notos were baptized on Easter Sunday at Obihiro Mennonite Church.

The Notos first came in contact with Obihiro Mennonite Church when a friend from work, now a member at Obihiro, invited them to hear him preach. The Notos said they had held back from baptism because they were more comfortable investing themselves in their organic farm, which they had run for 26 years, than in church organization and the human relationships it required.

As a child, Hideo Noto attended Sunday school at a church in his neighborhood. When their own children were elementary school age, the Notos took them to Sunday school as well. Hideo said that although he was not ready to commit to attending church himself, his own children helped keep him in touch with Jesus.

"There is some understanding that to be a Christian—to be baptized and to be an active member of a church—takes time and effort as well as just belief," says Mary Beyler, a member at Obihiro and missionary in Japan for Mennonite Mission Network since 1974. "I have friends who think well of the Christian faith but say they do not have enough time to become Christians now."

Aside from time commitment, accepting the Lord is rarely a quick decision in Japan.

"To come to Christian faith in Japan usually means starting from scratch, from zero knowledge of God and Jesus [as] revealed in the Bible," says Beyler of a culture in which Buddhism is the dominant religion, though few actually practice.

"By the time of the funeral," says Beyler, "Mayumi was beginning to recognize the depth of her own faith; she was becoming willing to tie herself up in the human relationships of the church—including death—in a more formal way and not just relate on the fringes or as an outsider."

The Notos announced their decision in February, following the death of another church member. Hideo, tired of waiting for his wife to find the right time, announced their decision to a church leader during a meal after the church service. Mayumi, unaware that her husband had already spoken, leaned over to Beyler as they washed dishes from the meal and whispered, "I want to be baptized."

Beyler, not believing her ears, asked Noto to repeat what she had just said. After Noto restated her desire, everyone burst into applause.

"We were beside ourselves with astonishment and joy," says church member Ryoko Sawada.
—Laura Kraybill of Mission Network News Service

Miyoko Kanno

Mayumi Noto (seated, right) was baptized on Easter Sunday along with her husband, Hideo.

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Reconciliation conference draws 600

Charismatic Amish, Native American, Swiss Reformed join Mennonites

Nineteen Swiss Evangelical-Reformed pastors and friends were honored guests at a gathering of Mennonite and related groups at the "Unlocking Our Heritage" conference held April 7-9 at Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland, Pa.

With an opening night attendance of almost 600, the conference was infused with calls to repentance, declarations of forgiveness and "prophetic utterances." Conference convener Lloyd Hoover welcomed the assembly, which, he said, represented an estimated 30 Mennonite and related groups. Hoover is a Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference bishop, though Lancaster Conference did not sponsor the event.

Our Anabaptist wounds are too deep to simply pat each other on the back. —Ben Girod

Native American Ivan Doxtator of St. Louis, involved in a ministry of reconciliation, gave the opening address. The people of his tribe, he said, had been the eastern gatekeepers of the Iroquois Confederacy to whom God had given spiritual authority for the region they once occupied. Therefore he could give "rights to access" for God's Spirit to bring healing and reconciliation of both the people and the land at this conference. Forgiveness, he said, is the key to unlocking the heritage of people who may have been locked by the spirit of unforgiveness in previous generations.

Peter Dettwiler, a delegate representing the Evangelical-Reformed Church of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland, said that an Old Order Amish group wrote a letter to their 2004 Zurich conference saying that their group would never consider asking the Swiss church to apologize for its persecution of Anabaptists in the 1500s.

"Nevertheless," Dettwiler said, "now we apologize. We are here because we hope for a day of new beginnings. We have different giftings. Let us share these in mutual respect and love."

Other delegates from Switzerland are part of an informal network of pastors and leaders working to bridge the gap between the state and free churches in their country. Though there have been numerous confessional statements by the Swiss Reformed since 1925—and as recent as June 24, 2004,—they continue to feel the need for repentance about the way their church persecuted the radical reformers.

Sabine Aschmann, Reformed pastor in Thayngen, Switzerland, told of her efforts to deal redemptively with the past. After learning the Anabaptist story, she was moved to place a memorial stone by the Path of the Anabaptists—also known locally as the Trail of Tears—that leads from Schleitheim to the hills beyond the village.

After many confessions during the April 7-9 event, leaders declared that forgiveness was granted. The image of sons returning to their fathers (from Malachi 4:6) was a major theme of the conference. Confessions were made for the "rebellion" of the Anabaptist "sons" who rejected the spiritual authority of their Reformed "fathers" in Zurich during the Reformation. That rebellion and subsequent attitudes of unforgiveness and divisiveness, leaders said, have locked the heritage of Anabaptist descendants. Only by repentance and a return of the "sons" to the "fathers," can the descendants fulfill God's intentions.

The idea for the conference emerged when Ben Girod and Geri Keller met at the "Charlottetown Gathering," a reconciliation conference on Prince Edward Island in August 2002. Girod was introduced as the Spirit-led bishop of a charismatic Amish fellowship in Libby, Mont., and Bonner's Ferry, Idaho. Keller, a former Reformed pastor, now leads a retreat ministry in Winterthur, Switzerland. The meeting resulted in reciprocal invitations to visit on both sides of the Atlantic.

"Our Anabaptist wounds are too deep to simply pat each other on the back and say everything will be all right," said Girod. "These are real issues. Our Swiss brothers have carried this reconciliation work in their hearts with us."—*John E. Sharp for* The Mennonite

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Gift surprises Mennonite Women USA

Anonymous $6,000 is used to match contributions made to Lydia Circle.

Rhoda Keener, director of Mennonite Women USA wants to develop circles of connection that can be as meaningful to women in the 21st century as sewing circles were in the past. But like all development, vision takes resources. A surprise gift of $6,000 from an anonymous family in late January has sent ripples of new possibilities throughout the organization that serves women in Mennonite Church USA.

In 2003, Mennonite Women USA created the Lydia Circle for women who want to give $500 a year to the ministry. The family asked that their gift establish a matching grant program for first-time Lydia donors, doubling their $500 to $1,000. Also, extra gifts from previous Lydia donors will be matched dollar per dollar. An expanded Lydia Circle will help Mennonite Women USA solidify current ministries, balance yearly budgets and develop new ministries and service projects, Keener says.

Since its inception, 31 women have joined Lydia. By the end of 2005, she hopes for an additional 20 donors who can help expand the ministry's scope in these changing times.

"We are simply trying to create new circles for women to do the same things that they always have—which is to care about God, each other and themselves," Keener says. "But we also need to find some new modalities of giving, serving, caring and fellowship. We want to do a better job of speaking to the needs of women throughout their life span, including the career woman, the mother, the grandmother, the single woman. Women who share faith are also women who share needs."

Former Mennonite women's organizations often hosted gatherings for sewing and quilting circles and other mission and service projects, Keener says. But more women today work full-time, and schedules don't fit that format. Women are also more candid in voicing needs regarding emotional healing. They are seeking resources on spiritual growth and learning how to balance careers with home and family.

While sewing circles still operate, some new projects don't require that women gather in one place to provide mission and service, Keener says. One such program is Sister-Link. It connects women in congregations and area conferences with women locally and globally.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

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For those interested, The Mennonite, Inc., posts a full audit of its financial activity each year at www.TheMennonite.org (click on "About *The Mennonite*"). We will also send you a copy of the financial statement by mail if you call 574-535-6053.

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CALENDAR

Eastern Mennonite University, ***Conflict Transformation Program 10th anniversary celebration***, June 3-5. Opening dinner and speech by John Paul Lederach; workshops by CTP faculty; presentation by Howard Zehr; folk music by John McCutcheon and a performance by Israeli-American actress Noa Baum. For more information or to register, call 540-432-4491 or visit www.emu.edu/ctp.

Historic Peace Church Conference, Sept. 8-11, Mariott Center, Indianapolis. The historic peace churches will gather and focus on what they hold in common in an ecumenical conference, "Seeking Peace: The Courage to Be Nonviolent", in partnership with the Plowshares Peace Studies Collabrative. Activists, scholars and other concerned individuals are invited to submit proposals for peace-related workshops by May 30 to Dean Johnson by email at deanjj@goshen.edu or mail to Plowshares = HPCC, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526. For more information, call 574-535-7728 or visit www.plowsharesproject.org.

North Main Street Mennonite Church, in Nappanee, Ind., will celebrate its 125th anniversary this year with a weekend of activities May 13-15. Wayne North, son of longtime pastor Homer North, will bring the Sunday morning message. For more information call 574-773-4558 or email nmainmen@bnin.net.

Souderton Mennonite Homes, ***88th anniversary celebration***, May 18, 7 p.m. Guest speaker Dr. Elton Lehman from Mount Eaton, Ohio. Tickets $10.00, available at the door. For more information call 215-723-9881.

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WORKERS

Busick, Dustin, was licensed April 10 as youth pastor at South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Heatwole, Eldon, was licensed March 13 for chaplaincy ministry at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Ranck, Dawn J., was ordained Jan. 30 for ministry at Plains Mennonite Church, Hatfield, Pa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Aeschliman, Austin Lee, March 28, to Kevin and Kristi Liechty Aeschliman, Wauseon, Ohio.

Alderfer, Eli Charles, Feb. 1, to Christopher and Jana Hostetter Alderfer, Harleysville, Pa.

Bates, Anise Ferne Boschmann, March 15, to Scott T. Bates and Tonya R. Boschmann, Phoenix.

Beachy, Josiah Jonathan, March 19, to Jon and Anita Miller Beachy, Coralville, Iowa.

Clements, Reece Jonathon, March 12, to Ryan and Andrea Hilty Clements, Wooster, Ohio.

DeMentz, Alexis Joy, Feb. 5, to Anthony and Crystal Nofziger DeMentz, Goshen, Ind.

Derstein, Grace Elizabeth, March 26, to Benjamin and Kate Rogalski Derstein, Telford, Pa.

Ebbs, Hannah Grace Wetzel, March 24, to Nate and Cathy Wetzel Ebbs, Albany, Ore.

Foote, Jaron Wade, Feb. 16, to Timothy (T.J.) and Raina Stoltzfus Foote, Inola, Okla.

Gering, Samuel Jacob, April 4, to Charles and Cheyle Wiedmeier Gering, Freeman, S.D.

Glick, Caitlyn Sue, March 19, to Milton and Stacy Nunemaker Glick, Goshen, Ind.

Goering, Elle Mae Enku, March 22, to Jonathan Goering and Hiwot Belay-Goering.

Haarer, Hope Irene, April 3, to Daryl and Crystal Shank Haarer, Goshen, Ind.

Harshbarger, Trey Matthew, March 12, to Chad and Denise Beyeler Harshbarger, Leo, Ind.

Heatwole, John Mark, Jan. 5, to Chad and Joanna Yoder Heatwole, Rochester, N.Y.

Hofer, Zachary Jacob, April 13, to Shawn and Heather Larosh Hofer, Freeman, S.D.

Holmes, Treyson Leo-Robert, March 10, to Jason and Sarah Anderson Holmes, Elkhart, Ind.

Hostetler, Andre Eugene, Jan. 29, to Kenton and Emily Workinger Hostetler, Elkhart, Ind.

Hoylman, Elise Ann and Renee Rose (twins), March 14, to Brent and Vicki Horsch Hoylman, Wauseon, Ohio.

Hunsberger, Owen Keith, April 9, to Keith and Jennifer Godshall Hunsberger, Sellersville, Pa.

Irwin, Eleanor Rebekah, March 16, to Bill and Tracey Irwin, Benson, Ill.

Jantz, Adrienne Marie, Feb. 10, to Rodney and Jennifer Geers Jantz, Inola, Okla.

Kanagy, Sarah Elizabeth, Feb. 14, to David and Carrie Swartzentruber Kanagy, Belleville, Pa.

Kiser, Grant Bishop and Megan Ann (twins), March 25, to Jason and Sara Bishop Kiser, Harrisonburg, Va.

Kolb, Abigail Jean, March 1, to Ben and Lori Moyer Kolb, Telford, Pa.

Lambert, Cody Jonathan, Feb. 27, to John and Angie Lambert, Wakarusa, Ind.

Landis, Joshua Levi, April 8, to David and Mary Glick Landis, Harleysville, Pa.

Miller, Grace McLaughlin, Jan. 9, to Merv and Mindy McLaughlin Miller, Goshen, Ind.

Myers, Samuel Thomas, March 28, to Tim and Heather Yoder Myers, Capon Bridge, W.V.

Nissley, Emilie, March 29, to John and Leslie Nissley, Ephrata, Pa.

Olmstead, Abigail Kay, March 29, to Nathan and Denise Hoover Olmstead, Croghan, N.Y.

Plank, Sophia Grace, Feb. 10, to Rob and Rena Peachey Plank, Belleville, Pa.

Popp, Abigail Meghan, April 13, to Steve and Tonya Short Popp, Aurora, Colo.

Reichenbach, Simeon Isaiah, March 25, to Neil and Renea Roth Reichenbach, Wayland, Iowa.

Riegsecker, Paige Olivia, March 5, to Ryan and Jodi Riegsecker, Goshen, Ind.

Reaume, Amelia Joy McMichael, March 7, to William and Ellen McMichael Reaume, Philadelphia.

Rodes, Destiny Lynn, March 30, to Owen and Julia Hoogenboom Rodes, Goshen, Ind.

Scott, Charles William, Feb. 28, to Steve and Ellen Hofer Scott, Mequon, Wis.

Snodgrass, Gemma Katherine, March 7, to Ron and Sandra Horst Snodgrass, Winchester, Va.

Snyder, Isabella Peyton, March 26, to Barry and Pam Schmitz Snyder, Baden, Ont.

Sundseth, Noah Jacob and Oliver John (twins), to Joel and Minke Sundseth, Minneapolis, Minn.

Unternahrer, Marcelene Lucille, Sept. 5, 2002, received for adoption March 17 by Mike and Karen Marner Unternahrer, Shipshewana, Ind.

Unzicker, Samuel Thomas, March 9, to Thomas and Andrea Bontrager Unzicker, Indianapolis.

Weaver, Emma Luise, Feb. 4, to Joe and Julie Weaver, Louisville, Ohio.

Weber, Macy Altana, March 27, to Robert and Cheryl Baker Weber, Conestoga, Ont.

Williams, Jonathan Samuel, Feb. 25, to Ashley and Julia Niehage Williams, Moundridge, Kan.

Yoder, Sophia Louise, March 24, to John and Sue Hershberger Yoder, Los Angeles, Ca.

Zerger, Ava Katherine, April 8, to Todd and Krisha Keimig Zerger, Memphis, Tenn.

MARRIAGES

Evans/Hooley: Monica Evans, Uniontown, Ohio, and Peter Hooley, Hartville, Ohio, March 19 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Gascho/Tsai: Joseph Gascho II, Hummelstown, Pa., and Elena Tsai, Ann Arbor, Mich., Feb. 19 in Taneytown, Md.

Martinez/Miller: Adriana Martinez, Hartville, Ohio, and Jeffrey Miller, Louisville, Ohio, April 9 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

DEATHS

Beachy, Ada Miller, 79, Goshen, Ind., died March 24 of a stroke. Spouse: Moses A. Beachy. Parents: Abraham and Fannie Miller. Children: Barbara Yoder, Paul, John, Philip, Robert; six grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Birkey, Ralph, 87, Narvon, Pa., died March 29 of a stroke. Spouse: Mary Schrock Birkey (deceased). Parents: Levi and Katie Oyer Birkey. Children: Esther Birkey Rush, Elnore Birkey Herr, Carolyn Birkey Myer, Arlene; 15 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 5 at New Covenant Mennonite Fellowship, New Holland, Pa.

Bishop, Ruth, 84, Perkasie, Pa., died April 4. Parents: Warren and Ida Hess Bishop. Funeral: April 7 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Christner, Carl I., 84, Millersburg, Ind., died April 9. Spouse: Sue Christner. Parents: Ira and Sylvia Swartzentruber Christner. Children: Steven C., Larry; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 12 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Topeka, Ind.

Dick, Arthur David, 71, Burlington, Ont., died March 8. Spouse: Elenor Unger Dick. Parents: Abraham and Agatha Peters Dick. Children: Brian, Joanne McKenzie, Kristen Delorme; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 12 at Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Enns, Elizabeth (Betty), 85, Altona, Man., died Feb. 20. Spouse: George Enns. Parents: John and Susan Braun. Children: Sheila, Lisa; two grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 24 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Funk, Tina, 92, Altona, Man., died Feb. 5. Spouse: John A. Funk (deceased). Parents: Jacob D. and Katherina Harder. Children: Carolyn Harder, Joan Froese, Sharon; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 9 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Galle, Bertha, 97, Moundridge, Kan., died March 14. Spouse: Dale S. Galle (deceased). Parents: Fred and Hulda Rupp Meyer. Children: Nelson, Dorothy Claassen, Edith Dahlsten, June Krehbiel; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: March 17 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Geissinger, Darwin A., 80, Souderton, Pa., died March 13 of heart failure. Spouse: Sara L. Halteman Geissinger. Parents: Henry N. and Eva Geissinger. Children: Laverne, Darwin, Merrill, Ronald, Aileen Naudascher, Betty Miniger, Cheryl Kiley; 18 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Glanzer, Susie Wipf, 100, Freeman, S.D., died April 7. Spouse: David Glanzer (deceased). Parents: Rev. David J. and Katherina Kleinsasser Wipf. Children: Selma Olson, Melvin, Alice Buller, Wesley; four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 11 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Goering, Eldon C., 83, North Newton, Kan., died March 29. Spouse: Bonnie Tangeman Goering. Parents: C.B. and Adina Goering. Children: Karen Dickson, Larry, Lauren, Laverne; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 28 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Harder, Carl, 89, Reedley, Calif., died April 8. Spouse: Georgierena Quiring Harder. Parents: George and Elizabeth Harder. Children: Carolyn Slusher, Diane Potthoff; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Harms, Clarence, 101, Newton, Kan., died March 29. Spouse: Alida Schmidt Harms (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Schmidt Harms. Children: Rosemary Means, Patricia Ruth Janzen; five grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Hileman, Edith Kauffman, 96, Wayland, Iowa, died March 20. Spouse: Everett Hileman (deceased). Parents: William and Sue Nafziger Kauffman. Children: J. William, Patty Sue Rullman, Mike; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

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Hostetler, Ida, 98, Louisville, Ohio, died March 29. Parents: Alvin and Mary Schloneger Hostetler. Funeral: April 1 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Janz, Dorothy Penner, 72, Inola, Okla., died Feb. 19 of cancer. Spouse: Joseph Janz. Parents: Jacob Penner and Anita Schroeder Janz. Children: Rosalie Walton, Daniel, David, Gloria, Dale; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Feb. 22 at Eden Mennonite Church, Inola.

Jennings, Polly Blosser, 86, Goshen, Ind., died March 3. Spouse: John Jennings. Children: Marilyn, Elaine, Vickie. Funeral: March 18 at Greencroft, Goshen, Ind.

Kanagy, Mabel Roth, 99, Goshen, Ind., died March 28. Spouse: John Forrest Kanagy (deceased). Parents: Harry S. and Ella Burkhart Roth. Funeral: March 31 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Kauffman, Lois Garber Keener, 88, Lititz, Pa., died April 5 of heart failure. Spouse: (1st) Clarence Keener (deceased), (2nd) Nelson E. Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Henry F. and Ada Nissley Garber. Children: Stanlee, James, Marcia Kauffman Clark, Harlen Keener, Martha Keener Thomas; 20 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 6 at Mount Joy (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kennel, Ira, 96, Atglen, Pa., died March 9. Spouse: Mabel G. Fisher Kennel (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Annie Mast Kennel. Child: Phyllis J. Fox; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Landis, Esther Mae, 88, Ephrata, Pa., died March 16. Spouse: Raymond Landis (deceased). Parents: John and Anna Forry. Children: Esther Mae Kurtz, Lois Elain Shenk, John Ray, Dean; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 28 at Ephrata Mennonite Church.

Landis, Levi C., 87, Harleysville, Pa., died March 22. Spouse: Lorraine Groff Landis. Parents: Levi A. and Fannie Clemens Landis. Children: Julie L. Musselman, James G., Joseph G., Janelle L. Kheshgi, J. Edward; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Memorial service: March 26 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Lyndaker, Lena W., 97, Lowville, N.Y., died Jan. 22. Spouse: Alvin Lyndaker (deceased). Children: Belva Zehr, LeEtta Widrick, Rose Roggie; 12 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 26 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Maust, Carol Nisley, 73, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 13, 2004 of kidney failure. Spouse: Robert Maust. Parents: Daniel and Mattie Miller Nisley. Children: Rodney, Brian, Jerry, Anita Snyder, Tina Marie (deceased); 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 17 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Nafziger, Louise Moushon, 82, Hopedale, Ill., died March 19. Spouse: Herbert Nafziger. Parents: George and Mary Wyss Moushon. Children: Daniel, Carol Eeten, Joyce Pfeifer; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 25 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Richer, Harold, 93, Wauseon, Ohio, died April 15. Spouse: Florence Short Richer. Parents: Samuel and Lucinda Aeschliman Richer. Children: Lowell, LouAnn Kanagy, Sandra Tinsler, Donna Oswald, Linda, Rhonda; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: April 18 at North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Sensenig, Alfred D., 37, Stevens, Pa., died March 15. Spouse: Alison K. Sensenig. Parents: Lester G. and Kathryn E. Good Sensenig. Children: Ethan, Olivia. Funeral: March 19 at Ephrata (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Shank, Jacob W., 86, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 2. Spouse: Irma Leinbach Shank. Parents: Rev. Clarence and Maggie E. Everest Shank. Child: Ronald; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 6 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Shenk, Doris Sell, 83, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 13, 2004, of Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Stanley C. Shenk. Parents: Clarence and Elizabeth Alderfer Sell. Children: David, Daniel, Philip, Rhoda Keener; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 30, 2004, at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Snyder, Melvin, 77, Waterloo, Ont., died March 7. Spouse: Norine Scheerer Snyder. Children: Larry, Gerry, Maynard, Joyce Pardoe, M. Grant, Sheila, Evelyn, Marlene Tindall, Myrna Neilson, Karen; 18 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 10 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Stauffer, William H., 95, Fiat, Ohio, died March 7. Spouse: Esther Baldwin Stauffer (deceased). Parents: William G. and Vena Stauffer. Children: Bruce, Bill; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Father's Day weekend at Echo Valley Farm.

Wengerd, Betty R. Kaufman, 68, Millersburg, Ohio, died April 2 of cancer. Spouse: Melvin A. Wengerd. Parents: Andrew and Elizabeth Troyer Kaufman. Children: Ken, Thomas, Marlin; five grandchildren. Funeral: April 6 at Berlin (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Ada R., 80, Christiana, Pa., died March 13. Spouse: John I. Yoder (deceased). Parents: Henry H. Kurtz and Eva B. Kauffman. Stepchildren: Gladys Martin, Vernon Yoder, Carol Jean Beiler, Fern Bauman, Janie Yutzy, John, Glenn; 19 step-grandchildren; 28 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 16 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Yoder, Anna L., 89, Tuscola, Ill., died March 13. Spouse: Omer E. Yoder. Parents: Levi A. and Anna Y. Miller. Children: Willis O., Irene Plank, Viola Michael; six grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Zacharias, Owen John, one day, Altona, Man., born and died March 23. Parents: Sheldon and Andrea Penner Zacharias.

Zimmerman, Florence Lehman, 88, Orrville, Ohio, died April 4. Spouse: Titus Zimmerman (deceased). Parents: David and Christina Sprunger Lehman. Children: Robert A., Joseph M., Rhea, Marilyn Hartzler, Charles Jones, Edward C. Jones, Dawn Jones; 13 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 6 at Auble Funeral Home, Orrville.

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Hesston College and Mennonite Disaster Service seek a ***full-time director of the Disaster Management Program*** at Hesston College to begin July 2005. Primary responsibilities include: developing and administering the program, recruiting and admitting students, advising students, teaching courses and directing field experiences. Qualifications: teaching experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite church and the missions of Hesston College and Mennonite Disaster Service. Master's degree required, doctorate desired. Please send a letter of application, résumé and reference list to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applications will begin May 16 and continue until the position is filled. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa., seeks ***half-time youth pastor*** to lead junior and senior high youth, be part of the church leadership team as well as serve in other areas of ministry within the congregation. Previous experience working with youth ministry is required. Associate or bachelor's degree in appropriate area of study preferred but not required. Candidates seeking a full-time position will be considered where individuals seek expanded areas of responsibility. Call 717-656-6388 or email churchoffice@groffdale.com. Résumé deadline is May 20.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time, one-year faculty position in theater***. MFA in acting or directing. University teaching or professional experience required. Primary responsibilities are teaching performance-related theater courses and directing departmental production.

Applicants should embrace the opportunity to continue building a young theater department that seeks adventurous, socially engaged theater, with a particular emphasis placed on innovative teaching and expansion of the traditional performance canon. Such artists should welcome teaching and creating theater at a Christian university that values diversity of expression and creative process. Application review begins immediately.

Send letter of application, curriculum vita, transcripts and three references to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, ugdean@emu.edu, www.emu.edu

Goshen College invites nominations and/or applications for the position of ***president***, expected to assume office sometime between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006.

Goshen College is a fully accredited four-year, liberal arts college located in Goshen, Ind., affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Additional information about the college can be located at www.goshen.edu.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate for president will exhibit three essential qualities: embrace and energetically promote the mission of the college "to educate servant leaders for the church and the world;" support and implement the strategic priorities of the institution, including Goshen College's new strategic plan; embody core values of the college and exemplify a mature and vibrant Christian faith, characterized by the gifts of the Spirit.

A terminal degree from an accredited college or university is expected.

Search process: Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or résumé may be submitted to Rick Stiffney, Chairman of the Search Committee, at andreab@mennoniteeducation.org or through postal mail to GC Presidential Search Committee, Mennonite Education Agency, 63846 County Road 35 Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621.

The search committee will begin reviewing applications in Spring 2005 and continue until the position is filled.

Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 thru grade eight, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire this summer. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Road., Newport News, VA 23602 or LJShowalter@aol.com.

Seattle Mennonite Church is accepting applications for ***full-time position of associate pastor*** with focus on youth ministry beginning September 2005. Position will be part of integrated pastoral team, working in collaboration with pastor and worship committee. Responsibilities include working with established youth program and developing new focus on ministry with young adults. We seek someone who will be a "good fit" with the congregation, able to be flexible as emerging needs are identified and with potential to grow into your gifts within a dynamic congregation. SMC is a vibrant Anabaptist congregation with multiple ministries and a strong commitment to peace and justice. Strong Anabaptist theological, spiritual and biblical grounding required. Seminary education preferred. Inquiries to Debbie Shank Miller, 206-789-5370 or dsm@cypressmail.net

Mennonite Central Committee is accepting applications for the position of ***MCC Central States executive director.*** The director provides vision and oversight for all MCC programs in Central States. Familiarity with MCC constituency, strong relational administrative skills and cultural competency required. Experience with budgeting, administration, Spanish language skills preferred. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply. Significant travel time within the United States. Contact Bruce McCrae, 717-859-1151, brm@mcc.org or your nearest MCC office for the full job description. Application review begins immediately. Start date midsummer 2005.

Mennonite Central Committee is looking for a ***human resources director,*** based in Akron, Pa. The director leads a 14-member department that carries out much of the human resource function of MCC, including recruitment, screening, placement, training and care of workers; compensation and benefits administration; personnel policy development and maintenance of personnel data. Qualifications include experience in personnel management and administration, knowledge of human resources policies, practices and tools, and solid skills in writing, problem-solving and negotiation. Cross-cultural experience and prior Christian service preferred. Candidates from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and /or bilingual (Spanish/English) candidates, and women are encouraged to apply. Contact Prem Dick (psd@mcc.org) for a copy of the job description.

Elementary and PE teaching positions for the coming school year. Consider joining our supportive Christian school community. Contact Thomas Burnett, Principal, **Hinkletown Mennonite School**, 272 Wanner Road, Ephrata, PA 17522; 717-354-6705; tburnett@hms.pvt.k12.pa.us; Web www.hms.pvt.k12.pa.us.

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Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2005.

Western seeks a ***social science teacher and English teacher***, for upper-level classes, with an Anabaptist faith perspective to lead respective high school departments. Drama and/or coaching experience valued.

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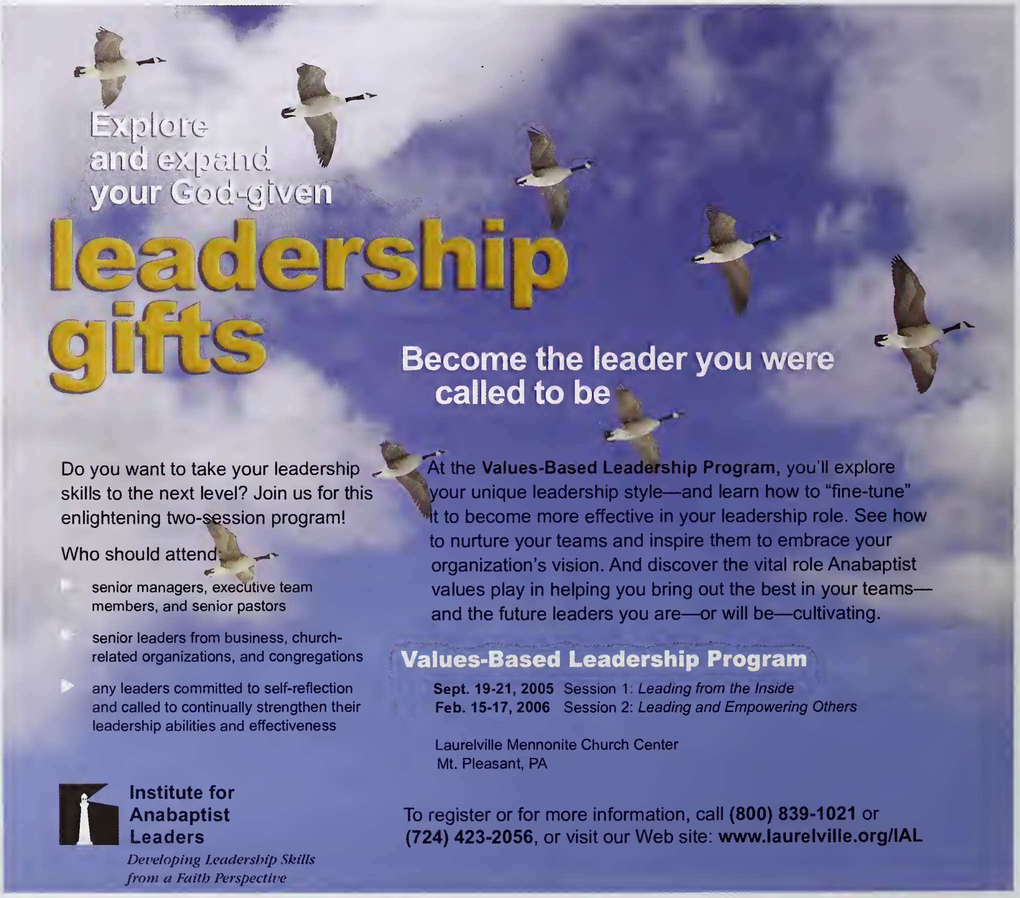
Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following positions beginning August 2005: ***math instructor, social studies instructor*** and ***Spanish instructor***. Send résumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org.



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Anabaptists Meeting Muslims: A Calling for Presence in the Way of Christ, edited by James R. Krabill, David W. Shenk and Linford Stutzman (Herald Press, 2005, $24.99), reveals a rich diversity of Anabaptist engagement with Muslims around the world. The essays and reports come from people who serve among Muslims, administrators at mission and service agencies, professors and scholars of mission, and theologians.

I am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments, edited by Carl E. Braaten and Christopher R. Seitz (Eerdmans, 2004, $22), explores anew the place of the Ten Commandments in contemporary civil society, their relation to natural moral law, their relevance for Christian instruction and their pertinence to ethical issues such as abortion, killing, homosexuality, lying, greed and the like.

God Has No Religion: Blending Traditions for Prayer by Frances Sheridan Goulart (Sorin Books, 2005, $14.95) draws from such diverse sources as Mother Teresa, the Qur'an, Gandhi and Native American traditions. Each prayer's tradition is highlighted, as are options on how to tailor it to one's personal preferences. Suggestions are also made for integrating the prayer into everyday life.

Sacred and Secular Scriptures: A Catholic Approach to Literature by Nicholas Boyle (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, $22.50) explores two lines of thought. First, it discusses a range of writers who have treated the Bible as literature as a means of reconciling the sacred and the secular. Second, it moves to the theme of literature as Bible, seeking a Catholic way of reading secular literature.

Voicing God's Psalms by Calvin Seervald (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) contains fresh verse translations of 37 psalms from the canonical book of Psalms and several psalmic passages from elsewhere in Scripture (both Testaments) into idiomatic American English. An accompanying audio CD features oral readings by Seervald interspersed with select versification melodies played by solo recorder or saxophone.

Rolling Down Black Stockings: A Passage Out of the Old Order Mennonite Religion by Esther Royer Ayers (Kent State University Press, 2005, $25) is a personal recollection of growing up Old Order Mennonite and the author's search for identity.

Divining the Body: Reclaim the Holiness of Your Physical Self by Jan Phillips (SkyLight Paths, 2005, $16.99) draws connections between the bone, muscle and sinew of the body and the spiritual teachings of various faith traditions, modern scientific research and the author's own experiences.

MCC Resource Update (Spring 2005) lists printed materials and video, DVD and Web resources from Mennonite Central Committee. Go to www.mcc.org/catalog or call 888-563-4676.

The Fall of Patriarchy: Its Broken Legacy Judged by Jesus and the Apostolic House Church Communities by Del Birkey (Fenestra Books, 2005, $26.95) links Evangelical and Roman Catholic views of patriarchy, not because they are based on the biblical text but because they share a common Western patriarchic tradition.

Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2005, $25) reunites spirituality and theology in a cultural context where these two vital facets of Christian faith have been separated. Peterson grounds spirituality in Trinitarian theology and offers a clear, practical statement of what it means to live out the Christian life.

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The search for well-born children—2

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Health-care Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu.

Would you custom order your children? If you could, what characteristics would you give them? Hair color, height, athletic ability, an aptitude for math or science? What if the children did not turn out the way you ordered? Should you return them or ask for a refund? While such questions seem far-fetched, they may one day be the logical outcome of ever-increasing technological abilities combined with our society's "eugenic" tendencies.

As I discussed last month (April 5), from the end of the 19th century until World War II, the United States was infatuated with the possibilities seemingly offered by eugenics. Eugenics was a "scientific" effort to improve the human race, end human suffering and advance the kingdom of God by preventing the "unfit" from having children and urging people with the "right" characteristics, such as high intelligence or social standing, to have large families. Protestant ministers, social service agencies and state legislatures enthusiastically advanced the eugenics movement. This movement eventually fell out of favor due to better scientific understandings of heredity, persistent Catholic opposition to eugenics and especially the growing recognition of the shocking cruelties perpetuated by the Nazis in the name of purifying the race.

While few now openly advocate eugenics, our society has eugenic tendencies equal to (or greater than) those seen in the 20th century's first half. Consider, for example, our society's reaction to genetically synthesized human growth hormone (hGH). Previously retrieved from fresh cadavers, hGH was the first hormone we learned to genetically synthesize (1971). When the synthesized hormone became readily available, parents of medically healthy but statistically short children immediately pressured physicians to provide their children with hGH. These parents were not seeking therapy for their children. They wanted to enhance their children biochemically.

Another example is the wide availability of sperm and egg banks where one can choose the appearance, social standing and IQ of the donor. A similar propensity toward eugenics is seen in those infertility clinics that advertise gender selection among their services. Prenatal testing is often promoted in ways that suggest eugenics. For example, recently I saw a local TV news broadcast that proclaimed the availability of "over 1,000" prenatal tests for various diseases and genetic predispositions, everything from cancer to various forms of addiction. The news item's unspoken subtext seemed clear: Wide-ranging prenatal tests will soon help you determine when to terminate a pregnancy because your child might develop a debilitating disease or socially stigmatized form of behavior. This subtext seems reasonable given that most women already choose abortion when amniocentesis reveals Down syndrome.

Opinion polls also show American openness to eugenics. For example, during the mid-1990s, polls taken by the March of Dimes, Time/CNN and the National Center for Genome Resources showed that somewhere between 25 and 43 percent of Americans approve using genetic engineering to improve a person's physical appearance or intelligence (Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*, Oxford University Press, 2004).

We should not be surprised at these eugenic tendencies. Our society spends millions annually on cosmetic surgery; every newsstand includes dozens of magazines that focus on looking better and getting ahead; shows such as "Ultimate Makeover" are centerpieces of prime-time television. Our society is fixated on productivity and having a competitive edge. Our society includes many anxiety-filled parents who fight to get their kids into the best schools and program virtually every moment of their children's days. In this context, it is not surprising that we look to genetic technology to "improve" ourselves and our children.

Our current move toward eugenics is more dangerous than that of an earlier age precisely because it is now implicit.

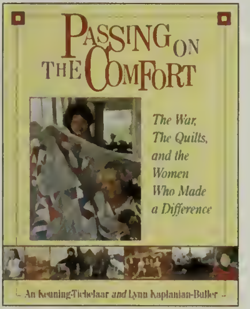
Our current move toward eugenics is more dangerous than that of an earlier age precisely because it is now implicit. Our penchant for eugenics is hidden and unspoken, part of the social fabric. As such, it advances via improved technology and the free market, unencumbered by ethical debate and moral scrutiny.

Anabaptist churches are positioned to discern, highlight and oppose these eugenic tendencies. To the extent that our communities remain "in but not of the world," we can help identify eugenic proclivities that are hidden from others. To the extent that we know that we are created and owned by Another, we can highlight eugenics' idolatrous assumptions that we are our own makers and disposers. To the extent that we know that our worth comes from the extraordinary fact that God loves us (and not from our intellect, productivity, beauty or other characteristic), we can oppose the eugenic desire to "improve the race." TM

PASSING ON THE COMFORT

The War, the Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference

The book —



PASSING ON THE COMFORT

The War, The Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference

An Keuning-Tichelaar *and* Lynn Kaplanian-Buller

Two women find each other in Holland, brought together improbably by a set of worn quilts, made by groups of women half-a-world-away who simply used what they had.

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- Then there is Lynn, 20-some years later, discovering the quilts and searching for their stories.

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Stitched by women in North America, these quilts were sent to Europe during World War II and distributed by Mennonite Central Committee.

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For the next three years this exhibit will be appearing at quilt shows, relief sales and museums in the U.S. and Canada. In mid-2005, the exhibit will be visiting the following places.

April	Pennsylvania, Kansas, Ohio
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July	Alberta

For more information and additional dates for this exhibit visit www.mcc.org/quilts.

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My dream for Charlotte

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

In 1999, 4,625 youth and their sponsors gave three hours each to service projects in St. Louis, when Mennonites accepted the invitation to "Come to the River."

In 2001, 4,431 youth and their sponsors gave three hours each to service projects in Nashville, when Mennonites accepted the invitation to gather.

In 2003, 3,609 youth and sponsors gave three hours each to service projects in Atlanta, when Mennonites accepted the invitation, "Ya'll Come!"

Given this year's convention theme, "Can't Keep Quiet!" I have a dream I cannot keep to myself. My dream understands Jesus' life among us as a model and a call to his followers to calculate and establish the extremes to which they will go to share God's good news.

If we think it's worthwhile to meet in one of the nation's rapidly expanding metropolitan areas, why don't we also establish in Charlotte an Anabaptist center to facilitate missional leadership development and a new church planting?

Mennonites can be found in most U.S. cities but are not forming new congregations. They work in the existing Mennonite congregations and in other Christian congregations, if they are part of Jesus' body at all. They share Anabaptist understandings of Christian discipleship across denominational boundaries in many places.

Something about this scattered, silent dispersion mimes the silence of Mennonites in their native territories. Like most children, Mennonite children age and often dust off their values in later years. There is something very promising about this urban diaspora of Mennonites.

Since the majority of Mennonites do not live in this nation's population centers, some registrants to Charlotte 2005 may laugh at my dream. Yet I don't think of my dream as unrealistic.

The future of the Mennonite church lies in the cities of North America. Our future lies in the hands of people with surnames such as Montes, Lee, Teng, Ortega, Vundlah and even McKinney.

Perhaps Mennonite conferences and congregations should receive a boost of support from the registration fees of each Charlotte 2005 participant as they lay plans to equip leaders and establish missional congregations in our metropolitan areas.

Perhaps Mennonites should lay foundations in the urban areas we visit and invest service project hours. Perhaps Mennonites should respond to the cities we visit in a more coordinated fashion. Many of us may be willing to have a percentage of our registration fees support the efforts of local Mennonites to establish Anabaptist centers to equip missional leaders and emerging congregations with an Anabaptist vision of congregational life?

We can establish another Anabaptist center in San Jose, Calif., in 2007 when we meet there. And between every subsequent biannual meeting, the coordinators can discern the next location through the influence upon them of another factor: Where does the Spirit of the Lord want us to establish Anabaptist witness to God's Good News next?

Congregations, conferences, agencies and educational institutions are focusing on God's compelling purpose for the church.

Many of us may be ready to participate in a radical activity to commit ourselves more fully to faithful witness in metropolitan areas.

How much energy, time and money will we spend in Charlotte in July? What by-products will remain as a result of the resources we expend there?

Wouldn't you be delighted to know that part of your registration fee went to fund the establishment of a long-term effort to equip missional church planters and Mennonite congregations in Charlotte, San Jose and wherever the Spirit of the Lord calls us to gather in 2009?

I would. TM

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send your letters to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Or email us at: Editor@TheMennonite.org. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion. *—Editors*

Denomination of anxious individuals?

As someone who has spent significant time thinking about the use of table groups for large-group decision making I want to express my disagreement with Marvin Zehr's concern that table groups will "stifle fruitful discussion that contributes to effective discernment" ("A Denomination of Table Groups?" Readers Say, May 3).

My observations are that the people whose voices are heard when the microphones are opened in large group meetings often represent only the voices of the most extroverted, the most anxious or those who come with single-focused agenda. Tables become places to hear the voices of the less extroverted, the less anxious and the more broad-minded and thoughtful.

I have been frustrated when people—who could not or did not take time to seek the counsel of a table of delegates—insist that their perspective deserves the consideration and time of hundreds of people. It takes significant humility to subject our opinions to table discernment, but I believe such a process will not stifle fruitful discussion but will improve delegate discernment and effectiveness. *—Kurt Horst, Somerset, Pa.*

Naming rights

Re Everett J. Thomas' editorial ("Naming Rights," April 19): Congratulations on yet another powerful and courageous editorial. You may receive letters from donors who will justify their naming rights when giving money for church programs or college buildings. However, by doing so they promote their self-interest rather than glorify God. They hold the receiving agency hostage to their will, but most importantly, they teach others—perhaps unknowingly—that using naming rights is supposedly an acceptable way. I, too, was influenced by this teaching, but fortunately *The Mennonite* has shown me the higher road. Thank you.

I used the editorial as discussion material in a Sunday school series entitled "*The Mennonite* Article Discussion." What a lively discussion that was!*—Erwin Boschmann, Indianapolis*

For whom do we fight?

I am writing with a comment on Karl McKinney's article, "For Whom Do We Fight?" (Grace and Truth, April 19). This is one of the best articles on nonviolence, nonresistence and conscientious objection I have read in quite awhile. Karl took several issues and responded with a succinct article completely based on the teachings of Jesus. I did feel compassion for him also. Angry rudeness is an attitude devoid of love for others. I thoroughly enjoyed this refreshing response to difficult issues.*—Mary Ann Templeton, Castalia, Ohio*

Wall is in-your-face reality

Two items in the April 19 issue caught my attention: First, thank you for printing Karl McKinney's article "For Whom Do We Fight?" He clearly and passionately articulates the meaning of true Christian discipleship that is sorely lacking in today's North American Mennonite evangelicalism. Second, I found Tim Baker's letter ("Article Misconstrued Facts") interesting. Baker tries to "nuance" (his term) a distinction between concrete slabs and chain-link fence/barbed wire by saying that only 6 percent of the Israeli "security fence" will be concrete slabs. Even 6 percent of a 430-mile barrier is still 26 miles. And only we in North America have the luxury of such a nuance. Whether fence or wall, the barrier is far more than a nuance for Palestinians—both Christian and Muslim. For them, it is a daily, in-your-face reality with devastating economic, social, emotional and religious implications.*—Frank Peachey, Akron, Pa.*

Bridge of hope

I appreciated the article by Jenny Forner called, "Transforming Your Benevolence Ministry" (April 19). Yes, single homeless mothers need security deposits and—as a growing segment of our society—they need much more. Bridge of Hope (the vision of two Mennonite women) is a growing ministry addressing this issue facing the church. Where Bridge of Hope is present, churches can refer needy women to Bridge of Hope. Here professional staff and trained church-based mentoring

IN THIS ISSUE

Charlotte 2005 is the name of this year's convention in North Carolina July 4-9. Unlike the last two conventions—Atlanta 2003 and Nashville 2001—this gathering will be binational. Mennonite Church Canada will join Mennonite Church USA in this setting; the schedule provides for both separate and joint delegate sessions (page 16). Depending on the experience this summer and the discernment of the leadership groups in both denominations afterward, Charlotte 2005 could be the last such joint gathering. Or there could be another binational gathering after 2009 (the year Mennonite World Conference will meet in Paraguay). Charlotte 2005 will also have a new wrinkle: Youth delegates from both countries will have their own business sessions (page 12). For Mennonite Church USA members, the primary business matter will relate to the Health-Care Access Resolution (page 14). But if past experiences hold true for this gathering, highlights for U.S. and Canadian adults will be the time spent in worship (page 19). And worship sessions will again be the centerpiece for the youth convention, as usual the largest of the four conventions happening simultaneously (children, junior youth, youth and adult).*—Editors* groups empower mothers (one congregation with one family) to attain permanent housing and financial self-sufficiency through employment and also draw them into community through life-changing friendships. Here they experience God's love; their children find security and they have a place in which to mature and grow.

In Forner's article things worked well for Suzy, who had found Jesus before she connected with the church, but this is not always the case. I envision our communities being blanketed with the ministry of Bridge of Hope—communities where many congregations welcome many homeless mothers, places where God's healing and hope can flow into their lives and where new friends walk together toward wholeness in Christ.—*Ruth S. Weaver, Ephrata, Pa.*

Can't relate to Name Withheld

I appreciate the letters—both pro and con—in response to my article "A Fear of Feeling: the Nonsensual Mennonite" (Jan. 18). In the March 15 Readers Say, a letter writer, signed Name Withheld by Request, alleged to be continuing to cultivate a friendship with me. Since I moved to Alabama over a year ago and have had next to no contact with anyone from that church since then, I was intrigued as to who my mystery friend might be.

I called the editor to find out, but he would not tell me since the person wished to remain anonymous. I am glad Name Withheld wrote this letter because it is a perfect example of what I discussed in my article. A relationship that exists solely in the mind of one person is a fantasy, not a friendship. It is impossible to cultivate a friendship anonymously.

If Name Withheld only feels comfortable pursuing a friendship with me when I am 600 miles away and oblivious to his identity, then he has mistaken the concept of boundaries with the impenetrable wall that exists here. What I did was upset some people by telling them that fantasy is different from fact, as evidenced by this letter writer.—*Martha Ann Burgard, Gadsden, Ala.*

Disregarding Scripture

In response to "Disregarding Scripture" (Readers Say, April 19): I can understand Andrew Nordquist's concern about being faithful to Scripture relative to women in ministry. At the same time, following his logic to its conclusion means Jesus and God were not faithful to Scripture.

The Pharisees were upset with Jesus for talking with Samaritan women, touching lepers and eating with tax collectors and sinners. They had the Scriptures (in our Old Testament) that supported their frustration with Jesus. Yet Jesus did these things against the teaching of Scripture.

Is it possible that now, in this time, God is speaking a fresh word to us, God's people, allowing us to fully understand what it means that in Christ there is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female? I thank God for people with the courage to believe that God is still speaking fresh words to his people.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Move beyond liberal and conservative

In response to Jim Krause (Readers Say, April 5): If Krause wants to apply the dictionary definition of liberal to modern politics, then he has to disregard all the abuse of the word by recent liberals. Such greats as Nathan Bedford Forrest founded that liberal institution called the Ku Klux Klan after the Civil War. Margaret Sanger founded that great racist liberal group called Planned Parenthood.

Then you have a more recent example of liberalism in Robert Byrd, who was a KKK member and, with fellow liberals, tried to block the Civil Rights Act of 1964. How about one of the latest examples of liberal integrity: Bill Clinton, who, when threatened by Iraq, bombed an aspirin factory while debauching the Oval Office with an intern.

Let's move beyond liberal and conservative and pray for our leaders, influence our government by calling, writing and visiting our leaders and, if so inclined, run for office. Currently there is only one Mennonite in Congress.—*Larry Roberts, Aurora, Neb.*

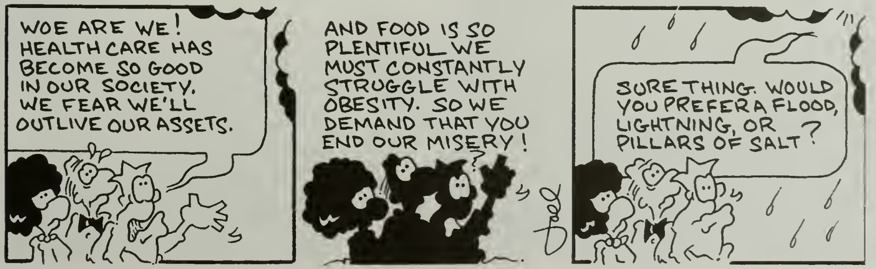
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Charlotte 2005 will be a binational (Canada and United States) convention. In the future, we should:

- ○ Meet together at every convention (13%)
- ○ Meet together once every four years (53%)
- ○ No longer meet together (23%)
- ○ Not sure (10%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


WOE ARE WE! HEALTH CARE HAS BECOME SO GOOD IN OUR SOCIETY, WE FEAR WE'LL OUTLIVE OUR ASSETS.
AND FOOD IS SO PLENTIFUL WE MUST CONSTANTLY STRUGGLE WITH OBESITY. SO WE DEMAND THAT YOU END OUR MISERY!
SURE THING. WOULD YOU PREFER A FLOOD, LIGHTNING, OR PILLARS OF SALT?

IN BRIEF

Three longtime workers retire at Hesston College

Three longtime workers at Hesston (Kan.) College are retiring this spring. Al Yoder concludes 25 years at the college, in assignments that included teaching education and English as a second language courses. Paul Friesen, ceramics class professor at Hesston, is retiring for the second time. The first was in 1978, after 22 years as art instructor, but he was asked to teach ceramics the past four years. Bob Nunemacher has resigned from his post as food service director at Hesston after 32 years of service.—*Hesston College*

Nobel winners tell nations to end hair-trigger alert

Thirty-two Nobel Prize winners have issued a statement urging nations with nuclear weapons to take their lethal loads off hair-trigger alert. Signed by former South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, among others, the statement notes that "thousands of nuclear weapons in the U.S. and Russia are on launch-on-warning status, and the megatonnage involved remains more than enough to destroy civilization and perhaps the human race."—*The Christian Century*

Vietnamese Mennonite released from prison

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—Ms. Le Thi Hong Lien was released from prison April 28, one of 7,820 prisoners granted amnesty on the occasion of the April 30 commemoration of Vietnam's military victory 30 years ago.

A group of 15 members of the Vietnam Mennonite Church, led by Mrs. Nguyen Hong Quang, went to the Bien Hoa Mental Hospital to meet Lien.

According to a report from the Vietnamese Mennonite Church, both Lien and her father were asked to sign an amnesty paper before her release that included a clause agreeing to house arrest for the remainder of her sentence. They refused.

Lien was arrested and jailed June 30, 2004, and convicted and sentenced to one year in prison by the People's Court of Ho Chi Minh City on Nov. 12, for "resisting persons carrying out official duties."

During her incarceration, Lien was beaten, abused and tortured to the point that she became mentally ill. Prison staff only admitted her mental illness on Jan. 28 but did not arrange for specialized medical examination and treatment.

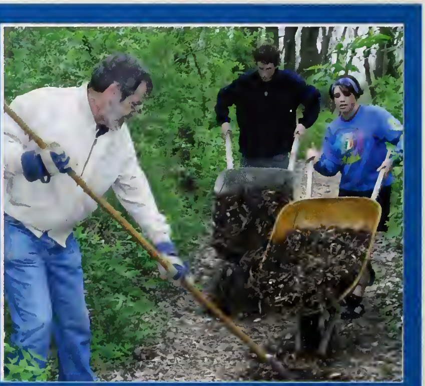
On Feb. 17 she was transferred to a remote prison some 170 kilometers from Ho Chi Minh City, and only on March 7 taken to the Bien Hoa Mental Hospital. Here her condition slowly improved. Several days before her release she told her father of the terrible beatings she had received at the Phan Dang Luu prison in Ho Chi Minh City after she was first arrested and interrogated.

Her jaw, broken in the beatings, remains painful because she did not receive proper medical care.

The Vietnam Mennonite Church believes Lien's release was due to the considerable attention paid to her case by many foreign governments, human rights organizations, international media and Mennonites and other Christians around the world. They thank all who prayed for them and all who contributed toward the needs of the prisoners and their families. Friends are seeking to raise money for her medical treatment.—*MWC News Service*

Blankets come to Sudanese displaced by violence

Fatima Hassen, a single mother who was displaced by violence in Sudan's Darfur region, receives a blanket from Joseph Akwoc, a relief worker with the Sudan Council of Churches, at a distribution of 1,000 blankets from Mennonite Central Committee in late March.—*MCC News Service*



Vada Snider

Service day at Bethel

Richard Rempel, professor of mathematics at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., works with Josh Piper, sophomore from North Newton, and Kim Schmidt, freshman from Wichita, on the Sand Creek Trail April 13 during Bethel's annual spring service day.—*Bethel College*

EMM workers shot at, robbed in Guatemala

CHAMELCO, Guatemala—Two masked gunmen fired a shotgun at Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) worker Zachary Wolgemuth May 9, when he went outside to investigate a barking dog.

Zach says he felt the rush of the shot past his head. The intruders were only 10 feet away in the dark. Zach yelled for help and banged on the house door, since it had locked behind him. Then he ran to the home of the watchman who lived nearby.

Annie, his wife, heard the noises and unknowingly opened the door to admit the robbers. The two masked men brushed her aside and snatched a radio and about $10 in cash from her purse but left without taking other valuables.

Annie grabbed a cell phone, barricaded herself in the bathroom and called Galen Groff, mission representative for EMM, who lives five miles away.

"The most difficult minutes were during the time neither Zach nor Annie knew what had happened to the other one," Groff said in a debriefing session May 10. "We are grateful no one was injured physically and little of value was stolen." Groff also noted that random violence and petty robbery are common in that region. Zach and Annie spent the rest of the night in the home of Galen and Phyllis Groff.

After arriving in Guatemala last year, the Wolgemuths studied the K'ekchi' language with a local family. Zach has overseen the construction of a girls' dorm on the campus of Bezalel Mennonite School. Annie has hosted the Mennonite Central Committee Work and Learn Teams that come to assist with the construction, and she has supervising the work of a weavers' co-op.—*EMM*

Reuben Savanick dies at 53

Reuben Savanick

SCOTTDALE, Pa.—Reuben H. Savanick, 53, died April 23 in Pittsburgh. He served as vice president of operations for Mennonite Publishing House in Scottdale.

A member of Scottdale Mennonite Church, he served as pastor to the deaf, teacher of the adult and youth Sunday school class and interpreter for Sunday morning worship services. He was a certified interpreter for the deaf and taught sign language classes. He also served on the board of the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center.

He graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College and earned a master of divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and a master of business administration degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He taught at Christopher Dock High School, Lansdale, Pa.,

He is survived by his wife, Martha J. "Marty" Detweiler Savanick; his mother, Ferne Edith Hernley Savanick, of Goshen, Ind.; his three sons, Benjamin, Nathan and Adam Savanick, all of Scottdale, and two sisters, Rosetta Brown and Elsa Works.

Camp Friedenswald denies BMC space

MINNEAPOLIS—The Camp Friedenswald Board decided to exclude Brethren and Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Concerns (BMC) from renting space at the Cassopolis, Mich., camp. BMC had held its Co-Ed Spring Retreat, commonly referred to as Queer Camp, there for several years.

The camp board made its decision Feb. 11 but did not inform BMC until after its retreat April 8-10. The board said the exclusion was based on the 1986 Saskatoon sexuality statement and referred to the part about sex being reserved between a man and a woman in marriage. BMC believes the reference was unjustified and the delay in relaying the decision unprincipled. —*BMC NewsNet*

'A kind of Mennonite Google' coming soon

NEWTON, Kan.—Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, writes in the May-June *Equipping* that a "one-source resourcing system" is being created on the Web that will allow pastors and other leaders to access resources from Mennonite Church USA agencies and conferences.

The new Web site, OneSource, will be "a kind of Mennonite Google," Schrag writes. It will be unveiled at Charlotte 2005 in July. Anyone interested in contributing resources may write bestpractices@MennoniteUSA.org.—*Equipping*

Fierce Goodbye documentary to air on NBC

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Burton Buller, director of Mennonite Media, has announced that the documentary *Fierce Goodbye: Living in the Shadow of Suicide* is slated to air on NBC-TV beginning May 22. Local NBC affiliates will have the option to air the program and will decide on the specific release time in the next six months. To find local channels, visit www.interfaithbroadcasting.com/ and type in your state.

The hour-long program, which aired originally on the Hallmark Channel Aug. 22, 2004, to about 45,000 households, has received four awards from various organizations, including one of the top four levels of awards for documentaries April 30 at the 38th annual WorldFest-Houston Film Festival. —*Mennonite Mission Network*

The Mennonite
Anabaptists in an American democracy

Photo, election issue, humor, poem, useful article claim awards at ACP for *The Mennonite*

The Mennonite **won five awards at the annual Associated Church Press convention, held April 24-27 in Nashville, Tenn. The magazine won an award of merit (second place) in photography ("Bangladesh Job Program Marks 30th Anniversary," photographer Matthew Lester, Nov. 16, 2004) and honorable mention (third place) for theme issue ("U.S. Presidential Election," created by the staff, Oct. 5, 2004, see photo), written humor ("Spring to Arrive March 10 in Goshen , Ind." by Jodie H. Beyeler, March 2, 2004), poetry ("Micah 6:8" by Paul David Adkins, Aug. 3, 2004) and most personally useful article ("A Watch of Love" by Walter Friesen, March 2, 2004). ACP consists of approximately 150 Christian, ecumenical or interfaith periodicals (magazines, journals, newspapers, newsletters), news services and Web sites throughout the world, though most are centered in the United States and Canada.—*Gordon Houser***

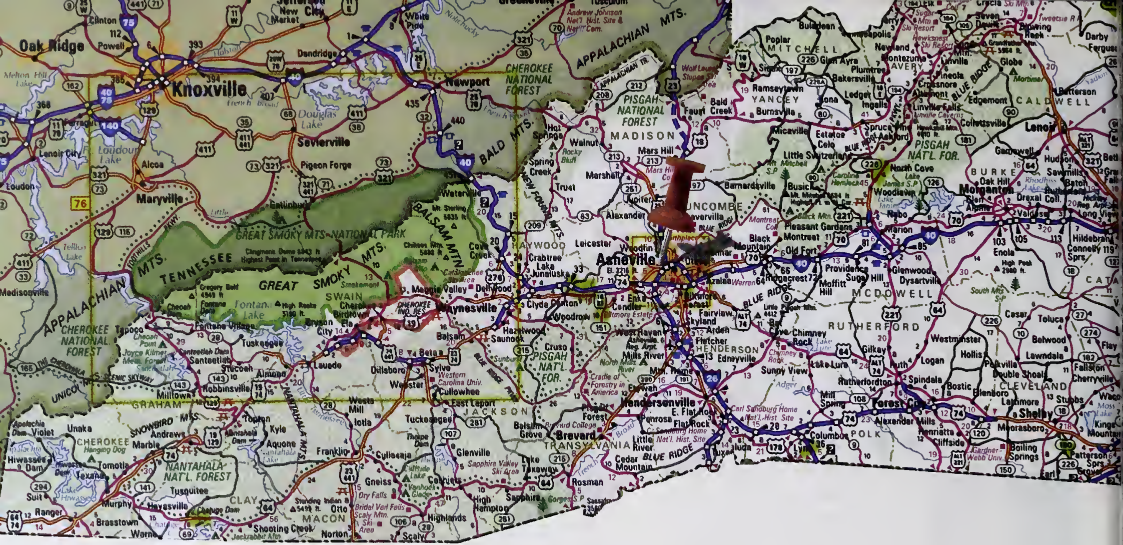
IN BRIEF

Barbecue, cinema on the border

On April 21, 17 people (including children) from Douglas and Bisbee, Ariz., as well as from Agua Prieta, Mexico, attended the first-ever Border Barbecue and Cinema Night. It took place atop a hill overlooking the barbed-wire fence that marks the U.S.-Mexico border. Among attendees were five CPT workers, who contributed to food preparations. The site was also visible to several of the vigilante Civil Homeland Defense—CHD (formerly Minuteman Project) vehicles deployed there for the night to watch for undocumented migrants that might cross from Mexico into the United States. A laptop and projector, powered by a gasoline generator, were set up to show *Hotel Rwanda*. A screen was attached to a barbed-wire fence and camp chairs were placed in front. —*CPT*

Nussbaum gets local leadership award as chaplain

Jerry Nussbaum of Galena, Ohio, and a member of Columbus Mennonite Church, received the Outstanding Local Leadership Award April 10 from the Association of Professional Chaplains, which has 3,500 members. The award honors "the creative vision and unique talent of association members."—*Mary Kendrick Moore*


Knoxville
Oak Ridge
Sevierville
Pigeon Forge
Maryville
Newport
GREAT SMOKY MTS. NATIONAL PARK
TENNESSEE
APPALACHIAN MTS.
CHEROKEE NATIONAL FOREST
PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST
NANTAHALA NAT'L. FOREST
Asheville
Waynesville
Brevard
Hendersonville
Marion
Morganton
Lenoir
Forest City
Shelby
BLUE RIDGE
MADISON
BUNCOMBE
MCDOWELL
RUTHERFORD
BURKE
CALDWELL
CLEVELAND
POLK
HENDERSON
TRANSYLVANIA
JACKSON
MACON
CLAY
GRAHAM
CHEROKEE
SWAIN
HAYWOOD
YANCEY
MITCHELL
AVERY

Churches grow up along the I-40 corridor north of Charlotte, N.C.

Can't Keep Quiet!
Acts 4:20
CHARLOTTE 2005

An hour north of Charlotte, N.C., rolling hills around the small city of Hickory remind Hmong people of their homeland. And that's where Chaiya Hadtasunsern, a Mennonite pastor from Thailand, is helping them forge a new home.

His congregation, Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church, joined Virginia Mennonite Conference in February. It's located on the east-west portion of I-40 in North Carolina, where several other small Mennonite congregations are situated. The Hmong congregation may be all but invisible from the convention site of Charlotte 2005. But the congregation won't be by the end of the joint assembly of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

As in other assemblies, Convention Planning staff will invite participants to give two offerings—one for mission overseas and one for mission at home. In the local mission offering, convention participants may support the Hmong congregation and future church plantings and multicultural outreaches in the region.

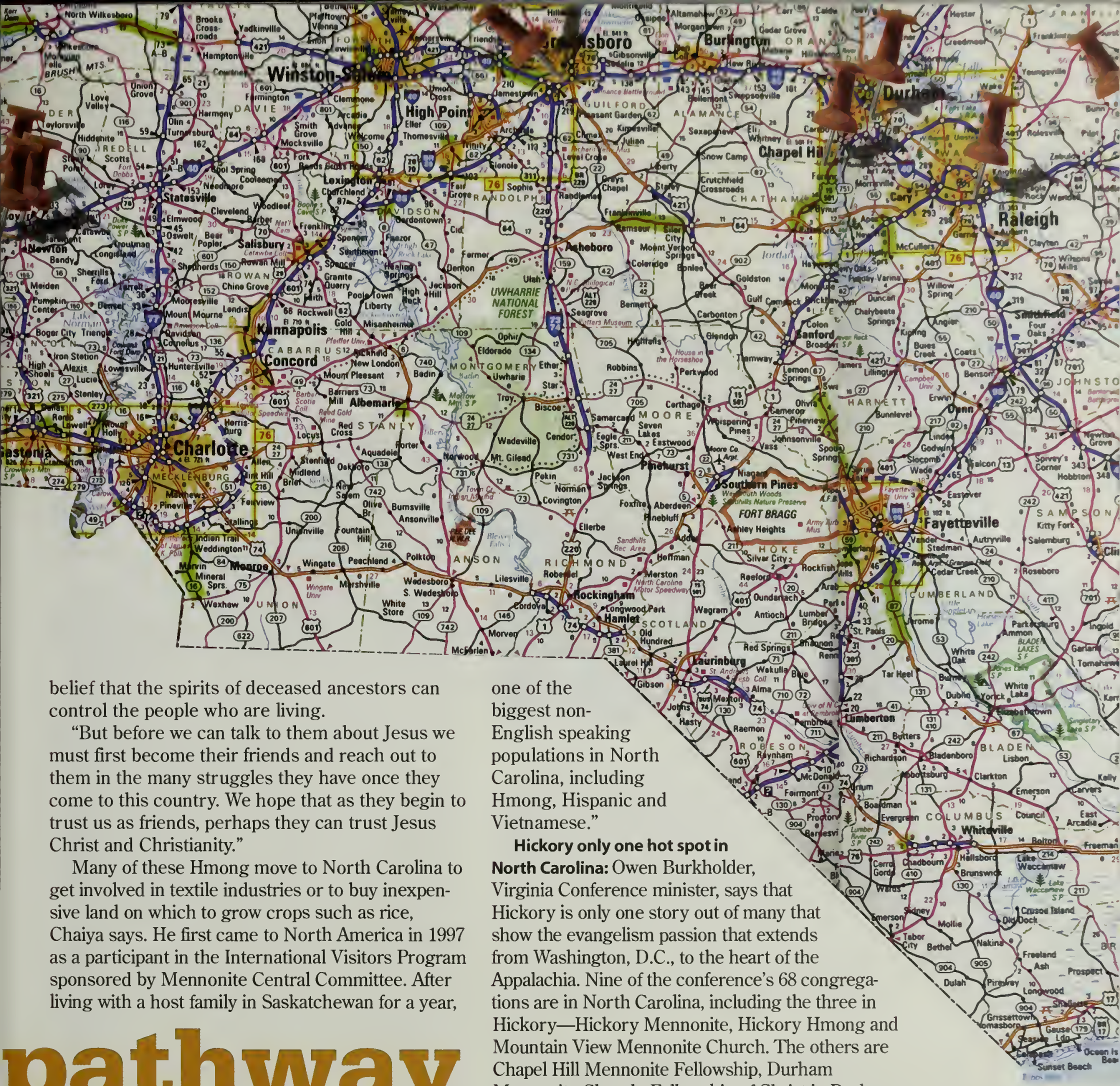
A church-planting

by Laurie L. Oswald

This Hmong group of about seven families is well-known among regional pastors and leaders in Virginia Conference and the Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions (VMBM). They help support the congregation in the conference's Tennessee-Carolina-Kentucky District. And they're all watching what God is doing among the 5,000 Hmong from Laos and Thailand who have settled in and around Hickory.

Those getting a birds-eye view are Chaiya and James Roth, pastor of Hickory Mennonite Church, where the Hmong congregation meets. The two pastors share a prayer partnership and cooperation. They plan a joint worship service each month and encourage the building of relationships across cultures as well as other ministries.

"I want to reach the Hmong people here with the gospel and witness to them about Jesus as Savior," Chaiya says. "They come from a culture that practices shamanism, a


Winston-Salem
Greensboro
Burlington
Durham
Chapel Hill
Raleigh
Cary
High Point
Lexington
Statesville
Salisbury
Kannapolis
Concord
Charlotte
Gastonia
Monroe
Asheboro
Sanford
Southern Pines
Pinehurst
FORT BRAGG
Fayetteville
Rockingham
Hamlet
Laurinburg
Lumberton
Whiteville
UWHARRIE NATIONAL FOREST

pathway

belief that the spirits of deceased ancestors can control the people who are living.

"But before we can talk to them about Jesus we must first become their friends and reach out to them in the many struggles they have once they come to this country. We hope that as they begin to trust us as friends, perhaps they can trust Jesus Christ and Christianity."

Many of these Hmong move to North Carolina to get involved in textile industries or to buy inexpensive land on which to grow crops such as rice, Chaiya says. He first came to North America in 1997 as a participant in the International Visitors Program sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee. After living with a host family in Saskatchewan for a year, he went home to Thailand. He enrolled in Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., in 1999 to prepare to minister to the Hmong in the United States. He first served as an associate with James at Hickory Mennonite before becoming pastor of the new congregation.

Hickory Mennonite joins Chaiya in befriending the Hmong, James says. "Even though our congregation is traditional, it is not traditional in its openness to relating to the Hmong," he says. "Our congregation's theme is to become an international house of prayer, since we live in an area that has one of the biggest non-English speaking populations in North Carolina, including Hmong, Hispanic and Vietnamese."

Hickory only one hot spot in North Carolina: Owen Burkholder, Virginia Conference minister, says that Hickory is only one story out of many that show the evangelism passion that extends from Washington, D.C., to the heart of the Appalachia. Nine of the conference's 68 congregations are in North Carolina, including the three in Hickory—Hickory Mennonite, Hickory Hmong and Mountain View Mennonite Church. The others are Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship, Durham Mennonite Church, Fellowship of Christ in Rocky Mount, Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship, Raleigh Mennonite Church and Asheville Mennonite Church.

"This is an incredibly diverse area that includes academia and Appalachia," he says. "And while we are not yet ready to plant a congregation in Charlotte, having the assembly here has helped us focus on what God is doing in North Carolina as a whole.

"Charlotte 2005 is helping us renew that energy for evangelism that has been a part of our history. And North Carolina is where the most activity is stirring. The area around I-40 that goes east-west and then south along the coast is booming with growing universities and manufacturing."

Continued on page 10

Can't Keep Quiet!
Acts 4:20
CHARLOTTE 2005

Charlotte 2005 is helping us renew that energy for evangelism that has been a part of our history. And North Carolina is where some of the most activity is stirring.
—Owen Burkholder

Courtesy Photo

Chaiya Hadtasunsern (left), pastor of the Hickory (N.C.) Hmong Mennonite Church, and James Roth, pastor of Hickory Mennonite Church, perform a baptism for the Hmong congregation.

Continued from page 9

Joe Bontrager, VMBM's director of USA ministries, says it's an exciting time for him in North Carolina. "There's a vitality there that you don't find in other areas," he says. "I think it is because those congregations are a bit more on the edges of things and perhaps are more willing to take some risks."

There's a vitality there that you don't find in other areas because those congregations are a bit more on the edges of things and perhaps are more willing to take some risks. —Joe Bontrager

Other examples of people joining God in reaching out to their communities include Keith and Tami Nice in Graham, N.C., where VMBM hopes to soon plant a church, and the ministry of Ronnie Pride, pastor of Fellowship of Christ.

"Since there is no Mennonite congregation in Graham, the couple decided to befriend their neighbors and offer parenting classes," Joe says. "That soon turned into a home Bible study. They are ministering to a lot of people who have been hurt by churches and who said they would never darken the door of a church again. But Keith and Tami have a beautiful way of keeping things real low key and relating to all kinds of people."

Calvary Community Church, an African-American congregation in Newport News, Va., sent Ronnie to Rocky Point to revive a dying congregation there. For years, the congregation's community had undergone demographic changes that brought African Americans to a neighborhood that had once been Anglo.

"Ronnie has resurrected the congregation that once only had 14 members and now has as many as 200," Joe says. "But with congregational growth, Ronnie is helping the community grow socially and economically. When he got here, he saw many men sitting on front porches and asked them why. They told them they had no jobs, and Ronnie got busy.

"He started a job training program for substance abusers, sex offenders and those who have criminal records, and he started a halfway house ministry for women. He's also a real entrepreneur and developed a couple of blocks into a flea market where local businesspeople can sell their wares, and a thrift store where people can buy good second-hand goods and clothing."

Like parents, like children: Church-planting vision and the entrepreneurial spirit that fuels it enjoy a long history in North Carolina, says Steve Carpenter, conference coordinator. To celebrate that spirit, he is spearheading a celebration June 4 at Mountain View to honor the late Clayton (Pop) and Edna (Mom) (Minniger) Godshall. They planted Mountain View and Hickory Mennonite in the mid-1950s. They also planted churches in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

The couple instilled this zeal for evangelism and church-planting in their five children, all who have been involved in church-planting and pastoring, says youngest child Ed Godshall. Ed, overseer for the Tennessee-Carolina-Kentucky District, says his parents' modeling was key to this evangelistic legacy. The other siblings are Esther (Bishop), Ernest, Evelyn (Nice) and Elizabeth (Landis).

"As Dad and Mom were planting churches … they took us kids along to sing and to minister to needy families," Ed says. "It was their modeling and their personal character that conveyed to us a way of life that we never forgot.

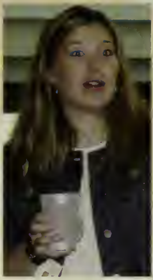
"Today, just like in the past, if each family instills a vision for being a missionary people that reaches out to their neighbors, helps those in need and shares the gospel, then that will shape the church. My family is just one example that this is true."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Young and older adults will rub shoulders at Charlotte

Charlotte 2005 is prime place to pass on Anabaptist identity, says Tonya Bartel.

by Laurie L. Oswald



People my age are about finding ourselves, and that includes wanting to be forgiven for some of our mistakes, while at the same time still being heard for some of our views.—Tonya Keim Bartel

For Tonya Keim Bartel, a member of the adult planning committee for Charlotte 2005, the assembly will provide a backdrop where young adults can absorb some of the identity they're seeking.

Tonya, a 25-year-old teacher in Overland Park, Kan., says planners must realize what a prime opportunity the July 4-9 event can be for passing on Anabaptist identity and values to new generations.

"I see a lot of excitement among people in their 20s and 30s about what is happening in the church," says Bartel, who attends Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kan., with her husband, Ryan, also a teacher.

"This age group experiences so many challenges—mainly the one of finding out what we want to be as adults, and it's a real tough journey at times. ... But a lot of mentoring can happen in fellowship and worship, and younger people like me can be really inspired by older adults."

Young adults can also absorb values to guide their journey toward mature adulthood, Tonya says. One way this happens is through the young adult delegate program—first introduced in Atlanta 2003—that enables congregations to send young adults with mentors to the adult delegate assembly.

"People my age are about finding ourselves, and that includes wanting to be forgiven for some of our mistakes, while at the same time still being heard for some of our views," she says. "The young adult delegate program can be a big part of that journey. It helps us learn how the church works and helps us gain confidence in using our own voice."

For example, she feels she and some other young adults view the "Can't Keep Quiet" theme in subtle terms. For her, it doesn't mean handing out tracts on street corners as much as it does sharing stories of faith in intergenerational groups inside the church.

"During this time of my life, it's really important for me to begin understanding how God has worked in my life and to take risks in sharing that among our larger church family," she says. "I gain strength in my own faith when I hear the stories of how older people have made it through, and that helps me learn so much about how I can, too."

Much of passing on the baton of faith can happen as the young adults and adults share the planning of worship and other activities, she says. Unlike Nashville 2001 and Atlanta 2003, planners decided not to create a separate young adult convention but to integrate their worship with adults while still planning some exclusive young adult events.

"As neat as it has been for young adults to have their own thing, I think there's a lot of value in doing it differently for Charlotte," she says. "I think it's important for me and my peers not to be cloistered off in our own little spot but to be involved in planning worship and other activities that we will share with adults.

"Throughout each aspect of the assembly—worship, delegate sessions, coffee shops, and music and drama performances—we'll rub shoulders with adults. In a hundred informal ways, we'll share our stories and our hopes and dreams for the church and inspire each other to move forward and to grow."

For more coverage of Charlotte 2005, go to www.mennonitechurchusa.org.

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Talkin bout my generation

Speak Up! to provide bridge between youth and adults at Charlotte 2005.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Because of a new program called Speak Up!, adult to youth interaction won't be limited to quick conversation in the meal line as at previous assemblies. At Charlotte 2005, adults and youth can speak face-to-face about what matters.

For the first time ever, more than 250 youth from across Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada will have two of their own delegate sessions, complete with table groups, discussion questions on current issues and open microphone time. For the third session, youth will visit their respective denominational adult assemblies to talk about what they discussed in their separate sessions and to invite feedback.

"As much as we talk about the importance of having the youth and adult conventions together, there's not been a lot of formal interacting," says Shana Peachey Boshart, who chairs the nine-person Speak Up! planning committee.

"This is empowering for younger generations," says Shana. "It's a way for the adults to say, 'We want you and want you to stay in the church. We want to hear what you have to say.'"

This won't be a matter of adults telling us what to think. We will get our say, too.—Miles Musselman

Miles Musselman, a high school senior at Christopher Dock Mennonite High School in Lansdale, Pa., part of a committee of youth and adults who helped plan Speak Up!, believes it will unite people—both his peers across North America and people across generations.

"It will be really awesome to see youth from across North America meet in one room," says Miles, a member of the youth convention planning committee. "This won't be just one or two people giving their opinions. It will be a united voice.

"And this won't be a matter of adults telling us what to think. We will get our say, too. And since there will be leaders from the denomination listening, it will help them shape programs for the future that really connect with where we are at."

In addition to building a bridge between conventions, the Speak Up! sessions are meant to invite youth into a greater participation and leadership in the church as well as create a sense of community among the youth. Speak Up! participants will also provide input that could shape the church in the future. In addition to interaction in the final joint session, adult assembly leaders will visit the two Speak Up! sessions.

"I think delegates are really going to be encouraged by the voices of our youth," says Ron Byler, associate director for Mennonite Church USA. "This interaction will help adult delegates remember that the real purpose of our gathering is to nurture a denomination that will be relevant to those who are becoming our church today and who will be its leaders tomorrow."

Shana helped develop a youth delegate program in Central Plains Mennonite Conference, where each congregation may send one voting youth delegate—ages 16 to 22—to the annual assembly.

"I love it when youth come to these meetings that everyone believes are so long and boring and find that it can actually be interesting," Shana says. "I often hear such comments as, 'It's cool what they're doing here.' One young person said, 'I don't actually get to vote, do I?' I see them grow into a sense of hope that they have something to offer and a deeper understanding of a church that they are a part of.

Lana Miller, associate director of Convention Planning of Mennonite Church USA, says inviting young people to join God's work in the world is what this Speak Up! is all about.

A program begun in Atlanta 2003 for young adults, called YODA, helped inspire this new program. In YODA, young adult delegates are given orientation, mentors and opportunities to dialogue with members of the Executive Board. This year, they won't each have their own mentor but a small group of mentors will be available for all the YODAs. Lana hopes this new program, along with YODA, is only the beginning of ever-widening bridges of understanding and growth.

"Executive leadership staff saw the importance of YODA and are backing this," she says. "We can't do everything we want to do this first time but will build upon what happens here. I believe this is only the beginning of something much larger." TM

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

mPress-ive opportunity

Student-produced daily newspaper at Charlotte 2005 becomes a shoulder-tapping tool.

by Laurie L. Oswald

mPress
Prayer
mPress
Quilting the church
X-plore

Laurie L. Oswald

Eyes and ears: Readers enjoy *mPress* at Atlanta 2003.

When Duane Stoltzfus moved from the editor's desk at *The New York Times* to become a communication professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, the word "mPress" didn't exist in his spell check. But for assembly goers at Charlotte 2005, the word will be as familiar in the convention halls as the *Times* is in subway cars. *mPress* is the daily newspaper that will report on all events of the joint churchwide assembly to be held July 4-9 in Charlotte, N.C., with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

mPresss made its debut at Atlanta 2003, when Duane first took over the editorship of the assembly newspaper, called *Grace Notes* at Nashville 2001. Duane also gave the newspaper a new twist. He invited college and high school students to produce *mPress*, with guidance from college staff and media professionals. At previous assemblies, only adult staff created the publication, which evolved over the years from a simple news bulletin into the four-color newspaper.

"What makes this experience really special is seeing how students mix with professionals and learn from them how to write a well-written piece on a stiff deadline," Duane says. "Often students will ask the professionals for help to make a lead sentence or a story sharper and more effective.

"And it's my hope that working on *mPress* instills greater interest in students for combining journalism and the church. I see that the experience can help shape a career for some students and open doors and to help them gain confidence."

That's the case for Sarah Rohrer, to graduate from Goshen in spring 2006 with a major in communications and a minor in youth ministry. Sarah, who grew up at Forest Hills Mennonite Church in Leola, Pa., was part of the *mPress* staff in 2003. And this summer, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference hired Sarah to edit two issues of the conference newsletter, *Gospel Evangel*, and to report on the conference assembly in June.

"I had gone to two other conventions before Atlanta, but being a reporter at Atlanta gave me a whole new perspective and carried a lot more weight," she says. "Because of my job as a reporter, I could go ask delegates questions or go see what the children or junior high kids were doing. I got a better idea of what was going on in the whole convention, not just the youth convention like before. … And it showed me that it's possible to integrate my love of journalism and public relations with my love for the Mennonite Church."

Develop wings on campus, fly to wider skies: Long before any students like Sarah try their wings at the convention site and go on to wider skies, Duane prepares them on campus. He requires students who help with the newspaper to take a three-week class, Religious Journalism. Students hone their skills in May, then travel to Charlotte in July to publish the newspaper.

Course work includes reading the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership; critiquing such publications as *The Mennonite*, *Canadian Mennonite* and *Mennonite Weekly Review*; interviewing people involved in Charlotte to write stories for the first issue and listening to guest speakers share about being communicators in the church and what it's like being a delegate.

I hope that working on *mPress* instills greater interest in students for combining journalism and the church.
—Duane Stoltzfus

Duane believes good reporting is needed in any community—be it convention halls or urban centers. He graduated from Goshen in 1981 in English and served as editor of the college newspaper, *The Record*. He went to work for newspapers in Brooklyn and New Jersey before he became copy editor at *The Times'* national desk.

"A convention, like any community, is full of too many experiences for someone to take in on their own," Duane says. "*mPress* is the eyes and ears for people that can't physically be everywhere they want to be." TM

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Delegates will discuss health-care

The Executive Board of Mennonite Church USA recommends the following delegate actions in order to continue this project to its completion by the San Jose 2007 Delegate Assembly.

Resolved:

1. That we affirm the Healthcare Access Statement as the foundation for our theology and witness.

2. That we commit ourselves, and call on our members and institutions, to promote health and access to health care. We will begin by inviting each of our member congregations to utilize Healing Healthcare: A Study and Action Guide on Healthcare Access in the United States *and to report the results of their study and work to the Healthcare Access Commission by no later than Sept. 30, 2006.*

3. That the Healthcare Access Commission continue its work through the next biennium with a primary focus on distributing information and developing tools to assist Mennonite Church USA congregations and their members, as well as area conferences and church-related health-care institutions, in dealing with the growing challenges of health-care costs and access as a community of faith.

Special instructions: The information and tools will grow out of a consideration of the following:

a. the special needs of congregations and institutions as documented by the studies conducted through 2005,

b. the stories that have been shared and collected across the church through surveys, focus group meetings and other means,

c. the variety of creative, innovative methods our congregations and institutions are currently engaged with, as reflected in their reports and suggestions (see #2 above.)

A summary of findings and recommendations will be included as a part of the Healthcare Access Commission's final report on behalf of Mennonite Church USA for the 2007 delegate assembly.

Our theology

As followers of Jesus Christ we seek to provide love and care to all people. Our concern for the health-care system is rooted in our desire to be disciples of Jesus. Our Savior and Lord intertwined preaching, teaching and healing as reported in the earliest written Gospel (Mark 2:11-12; 7:24-30; 10:46-52). Jesus focused his mission on abundant life (John 10:10). Jesus healed the sick as a sign of God's reign (Matthew 9:35; Luke 7:18-23). Jesus challenged unjust societal structures (Matthew 23:23) and called for fundamental social change (Mark 11:15-19; Luke 4:16-21). Our concern grows from conviction that all people have dignity and worth because they are created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27; 9:6). Our concern blossoms from affirmation that life and health are God's gifts, which we respond to in grateful stewardship (Psalm 107). Our concern is energized by realizing that God's love manifests itself in concern for our neighbor's well-being (Matthew 22:34-40; 1 John 3:17-18).

Throughout 20 centuries the Christian church has offered health care as part of a worldwide witness. Early Anabaptists incorporated Jesus' concern and care for the poor and the sick into confessions of faith. Citing Scriptures such as "faith apart from works is barren" (James 2:20), Mennonites the world over have sought service opportunities and made healing ministries pivotal in missions. In that tradition, Mennonite Church USA believes the church in mission "is called to be a channel of God's healing," which includes "the service of prayer and anointing with oil" (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Article 10, 1995). Mennonite Church USA members pledge to live in a way "that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world" (Vision: Healing and Hope, 1995). Mutual aid, advances in mental health treatment emerging from Civilian Public Service, and compassionate health care for all are part of the Mennonite heritage. We now renew our commitment to this tradition of care.

We grieve that our current health-care system suffers from complexity, greed, racism, fear of death and lack of concern for the common good. Examples of this suffering include

- 45 million uninsured, over 70 percent of whom are among the working poor, who are sicker and die younger than those with health insurance[1];
- the world's highest per capita health-care expenditure coupled with comparatively poor outcomes in life expectancy, infant death rates, incidence of childhood asthma and immunization rates[2];
- the high incidence and cost of chronic diseases related to physical inactivity combined with a rapidly growing percentage of both children and adults who are either overweight or obese[3];
- substandard care for people of color, who are less likely to receive medical services than whites, even with comparable income and insurance[4];
- runaway costs that erode employee health-care benefits, undermine small business and force more people into personal bankruptcy than nearly any other cause[5];
- exclusion of the weakest and most vulnerable

access statement

citizens from basic, nonemergency health-care coverage, unlike all other developed nations[6];

- decreasing access to appropriate assisted-living and skilled-nursing care for those on low and fixed incomes, including many who invested their lives in service through the church and now are told that Anabaptist-related providers are financially unable to accept them.[7]

Health care, in the biblical tradition of shalom, promotes and improves the physical and mental well-being of people, families and communities. While we applaud impressive advances in medical technology and treatment that have done much to cure disease and ease suffering, we contend that health care in the United States is unjustly distributed, broken and unsustainable.

We admit our own guilt in this unjust situation. Due to both our financial interests and our desire to avoid inconvenience and suffering, we have often failed in recent decades to make sacrifices to provide aid to those among us who need it most. We have not lived up to our potential in being good stewards of our health. We also failed to speak in a unified public voice calling for change.

God Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer is sovereign over all of life. We respond to God's love by service in all areas of life. So we must assist and prod ourselves, our congregations, our institutions and our government to care for all people as together we work to promote health and relieve suffering in the name of Christ.

Our witness

Because health is a gift from God and our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19), we seek to be better stewards of our health.[8] As Anabaptists we want our Christian beliefs to drive our behavior and actions in relation to our health. At the same time, because we are finite creatures and because we believe in the resurrection of the dead, we will accept limitations on medical intervention from the beginning through the end of life.

Because our life together in Christian community is a foretaste of the kingdom of God (John 13:34-35; Acts 2:37-47; 4:32-35; James 1:18-27) we commit ourselves to work toward adequate access to health care for all our brothers and sisters, including our pastors, in Mennonite Church USA.

Because health and healing are part of God's mission to redeem brokenness in the world, we will work with diligence as stewards of the gospel to provide better health-care access for our neighbors.

Because the scriptural test of a just nation is how it treats its weakest members (Micah 6:8; Amos 5:24; Jeremiah 5:26-29), we will be clear and consistent advocates to policy-makers on behalf of public health matters and access to health care for everyone. We join other faith-based communities in urging our government to establish policy for a system of health care in which everyone, everywhere in the United States has access to basic, affordable health care and where the risks and expenses are shared by all.[9]

A call to prayer

As Mennonite Church USA 2005 Assembly delegates, we acknowledge that our deepest hopes and most prophetic acts for justice in health care will be in vain without God's Spirit leading us into new and unforeseen directions. Therefore, we humbly call on God in prayer to expand our vision and witness in this arena of health-care access.

Notes

[1] Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, "The Uninsured: A Primer", publication #7216, February 2005 (www.kff.org/uninsured/7216.cfm). Eighty percent of the uninsured live in working families, and two-thirds of the uninsured live in families making less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty level (less than $37,620 for a family of four in 2003.)

[2] National Center for Health Statistics, Health, United States, 2004 tables 25, 26 and 115. This reference contains a wealth of data about the U.S. health-care system and is available at www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus04.pdf. Also see the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/20/48/16502658.pdf and the American Lung Association at www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=261875.

[3] Chronic diseases include diabetes, heart disease and various types of cancer. See, for example, Health, United States, 2004 from footnote #2 pages 3-4, 34-37, table 69. See also World Health Organization Fact Sheet at www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/gs_obesity.pdf

[4] Institute of Medicine, Unequal Treatment, Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care, (The National Academies Press, 2003).

[5] Trends and Indicators in the Changing Health Care Marketplace 2002 (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation May 2002).

[6] Institute of Medicine, Care Without Coverage: Too Little, Too Late (National Academies Press, 2002).

[7] 2004 Provider Access Survey-MHS Alliance

[8] MMA's Guidelines for the Stewardship of Health at www.mma-online.org/corporate/04_03_stewardship_health_guides.pdf

[9] See www.uhcan.org/faith/faith_statements/intro.htm

Dee Birkey

At Charlotte 2005, for the first time since their formation, Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada will meet at the same convention. Each denomination will hold its own discernment time (Canada) and delegate sessions (USA) but will meet together as delegates on July 6. Meanwhile, both groups will take in times of worship, seminars, Bible studies, concerts, drama and a hymnsing.

While U.S. delegates will look at a statement on health-care access (page 14), Canadian delegates will consider the following:

- decide whether or not to approve a Statement of Identity and Purpose;
- discuss issues in funding the ministries of the church;
- discuss continuing relationships between Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA (that's the joint session);
- discuss a proposal for a Faith and Life Committee;
- discuss definitions and expectations of membership in Mennonite Church Canada and
- discuss a General Board recommendation that Mennonite Church Canada delegates continue to meet in an annual assembly and review this decision in 2010.

—*Gordon Houser, with contributions from Dan Dyck*

Canadian and U.S. delegates will be at Charlotte 2005

Dee Birkey

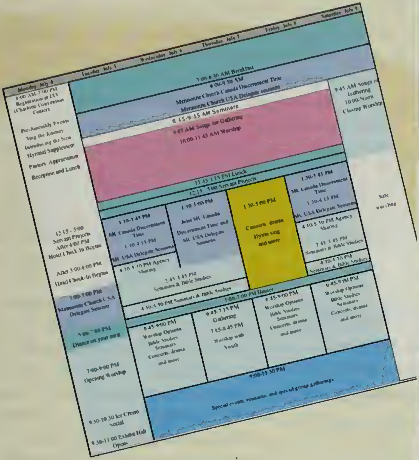
Charlotte 2005 Assembly registrations*

	U.S.	Canada	Total
Youth	4,607	483	5,090
Junior Youth	181	7	188
Children	169	15	184
Preschool	39	1	40
Infant/Toddler	30	0	30
Adults	2,072	288	2,360
Grand total			**7,892**

***as of May 10**

Can't Keep Quiet! Acts 4:20
CHARLOTTE 2005

Speakers for adult sessions at Charlotte 2005



Monday July 4	Tuesday July 5	Wednesday July 6	Thursday July 7	Friday July 8	Saturday July 9
8:00 AM-7:00 PM Registration at CCC (Charlotte Convention Center)	7:00-8:30 AM Breakfast				
Pre-Assembly Events Sing the Journey Introducing the New Hymnal Supplement Pastors Appreciation Reception and Lunch	8:00-9:30 AM Mennonite Church Canada Discernment Time Mennonite Church USA Delegate sessions 8:15-9:15 AM Seminars				9:45 AM Songs of Gathering 10:00-Noon Closing Worship
	9:45 AM Songs for Gathering 10:00-11:45 AM Worship				
	11:45-1:15 PM Lunch 12:15-5:00 Servant Projects				
12:15-5:00 Servant Projects After 4:00 PM Hotel Check-in Begins	1:30-3:45 PM MC Canada Discernment Time 1:30-4:15 PM MC USA Delegate Sessions	1:30-5:00 PM Joint MC Canada Discernment Time and MC USA Delegate Sessions	1:30-5:00 PM Concerts, drama, Hymn sing and more	1:30-3:45 PM MC Canada Discernment Time 1:30-4:15 PM MC USA Delegate Sessions	Safe traveling
After 3:00-4:00 PM Hotel Check-in Begins	4:10-5:30 PM Agency Sharing 2:45-3:45 PM Seminars & Bible Studies			4:10-5:30 PM Agency Sharing 2:45-3:45 PM Seminars & Bible Studies 4:10-5:30 PM Seminars & Bible Studies	
3:00-5:00 PM Mennonite Church USA Delegate Session	4:10-5:30 PM Seminars & Bible Studies				
5:00-7:00 PM Dinner on your own	5:00-7:00 PM Dinner				
7:00-9:00 PM Opening Worship	6:45-9:00 PM Worship Options Bible Studies Seminars Concerts, drama and more	6:45-7:15 PM Gathering 7:15-8:45 PM Worship with Youth	6:45-9:00 PM Worship Options Bible Studies Seminars Concerts, drama and more	6:45-9:00 PM Worship Options Bible Studies Seminars Concerts, drama and more	
9:30-10:30 Ice Cream Social 9:30-11:00 Exhibit Hall Opens	9:00-11:30 PM Special events, reunions, and special group gatherings				

Monday evening, July 4
Michele Hershberger, chair of the Bible department at Hesston (Kan.) College, will speak on "Walking and Leaping and Praising God," based on Acts 3:1-10.

Tuesday morning, July 5
J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., will speak on "By the Power of Jesus," based on Acts 4:13-21.

Wednesday morning, July 6
Peter Stucky, pastor of Teusaquillo Mennonite Church near downtown Bogotá, Colombia, president of the Colombian Mennonite Church and a member of the Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee, will speak on "We Cannot Be Quiet!" based on Acts 4:1-12.

Thursday morning, July 7
Barbara Green Moses, founding principal of Philadelphia Mennonite High School, will speak on "Filled with the Spirit," based on Acts 4:23-30.

Friday morning, July 8
Bishop Leslie III and Natalie Francisco, senior pastors of Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va., and overseers of congregational ministries in Chesapeake and Smithfield, Va.; Rocky Mount, N.C.; Houston and Accra, Ghana, will speak on "Of One Heart and Soul," based on Acts 4:31-37.

Saturday morning, July 9
Ray Aldred, a member of the Swan River Cree Nation, Alberta, and director for the First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada, will speak on "Speaking What We Have Seen and Heard," based on Acts 4:20.

Dee Birkey

Why come to Charlotte?

D. Duane Oswald is moderator of Mennonite Church USA.

We will soon be meeting in Charlotte, N.C., for the biennial Assembly of Mennonite Church USA. We can't keep quiet about what God has done in our midst. We look forward to hearing stories of God at work among us. We will also be meeting for the second time as a new delegate body responsible for decision-making in our transformed denomination.

For some, the role of delegate will be a new experience. For others it will be a continuing education in how to be a delegate in this new denomination. As we transformed into Mennonite Church USA, we wanted a new delegate assembly culture, not just the best of both but one that would guide us in the transformation process, in becoming a missional church, in creating opportunities for growth in relationships and in uniting us in new ways as the body of Christ.

After the last assembly in Atlanta, the Executive Board took seriously the counsel of the delegates in forming the agenda for Charlotte. We are attempting to have a better balance between presentations from the front and discussion at the tables. We are trying to have fewer action items and more discussion on direction and group expression at the tables on priorities of Mennonite Church USA.

As a transformed denomination, we want to conduct the business of the church in a way that reflects who we are as a people in worship and praise rather than simply as a business meeting.

As an Executive Board, we are attempting to create a new culture of delegate assemblies, one of discussion and discernment. The previous model was one of debate and deciding. We desire a full discussion of issues and questions with ultimate discernment by the delegate body. As a transformed denomination, we want to conduct the business of the church in a way that reflects who we are as a people in worship and praise rather than simply as a business meeting. We believe this is best accomplished through the table-group format.

Table groups facilitate discussion by allowing all delegates to address all issues and questions rather than only those who can get to the "open mike." Each person is free to express an opinion and be heard on various questions. Table groups can discern the common thought of the table, which is then shared with the broader delegate assembly through oral feedback at the microphone or in written feedback compiled with the minutes. People with differing opinions can also submit "second opinions" in the same way. Through the table-group process, we get to know each other better and begin to develop relationships on which future discussion can be held. This format also creates a sense of community in the discussion and decision-making process as together we seek the common good and will of God.

Some have asked why come to Charlotte if no decisions are to be made. As a transformed denomination, we are learning new ways to make decisions. The former process called for wide discussion and debate, then a vote. We desire a process that enables wide opportunity for discussion without pressures of time and discernment as a body. We want what seems right to the Holy Spirit and to us and seeks the common good.

At our meetings in Charlotte we will provide input to the delegates on progress on our priorities. We desire feedback and discernment on this as well as how we should address the priorities. We will seek input on other issues, from antiracism goals and implementation plans to our developing relationship with Christian Churches United and other ecumenical activities. We will also meet in joint session with Mennonite Church Canada. We will seek discernment on the future relationship with Canada and the question of joint delegate assemblies or other joint meetings with Canada. We will also have time for dreaming. What counsel and direction do the delegates have for executive leadership? What should be the priorities for Mennonite Church USA? The domination exists to serve our members and congregations. We need delegate discernment and direction to carry out God's purposes for us.

Why come to Charlotte? To be part of the process of discerning the vision and mission for our transformed denomination. To be part of the process of discernment of the direction of our transformed denomination. To celebrate the unity of Christ in being a missional church. To hear and share stories of God at work in our diverse communities. To make new friends and see friends from across the church.

See you there.

Correction: The Web address for more information was incorrect in Speaking Out (May 3). The correct address is www.cptuk.org.uk/tim.html

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Wise as serpents, innocent as doves**—Julie Hart
- **Survey of Mennonite school commencements**

2005 Directory shows losses from 2003

Mennonite Church USA is down 2,941 members and 49 congregations.

Three years after the denominational merger that created Mennonite Church USA, the dust apparently is starting to settle around membership numbers. According to the 2005 denominational directory, this has meant a membership dip of about 2.5 percent. At the end of 2004, Mennonite Church USA had 111,031 members in 943 congregations in 45 states —a decline of 2,941 members and 49 congregations since 2003, when the last directory was published. The period between directories was one of stabilization in the new church, with many conferences and congregations making decisions about whether to join.

Though some conferences gained a few congregations since 2003, others lost significant numbers of churches and members, in part because of the membership discernment process. In some cases, other factors applied.

A conference that opted to join in 2004 was affected most—Lancaster Mennonite Conference, with 17,496 members and 186 congregations, according to the latest tally. Lancaster, where the decision to join Mennonite Church USA was debated over several doctrinal matters and led to congregations withdrawing, shrank by 1,033 members and 17 congregations since 2003. Conference moderator Keith Weaver says even though Lancaster voted to join the denomination, the issue of membership remains sensitive.

"There are still congregations for whom this decision is difficult," Weaver says. "I want to respect those congregations and continue to hear their concerns." Membership in the denomination, he says, is "a work in process, very much so."

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference lost seven congregations since 2003, with a loss of 551 members. It now has 85 congregations and 10,065 members. Sherm Kauffman, executive conference minister, says Indiana-Michigan was wrestling with a variety of theological issues well before the merger, ranging from biblical interpretation to leadership styles.

"There were other issues in the system here, and to say it was all due to the merger, I couldn't go there," Kauffman says. "The merger provided a window for congregations to make decisions about association [with the conference] that they would not normally have."

Kauffman says the loss of two congregations—Central Mennonite Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., and Fairview (Mich.) Mennonite Church—had a significant impact, not only in terms of participation in the church but contributions sent to the conference. The funding loss alone—about $50,000 a year —led to the elimination of one conference-level ministry position, Kauffman says.

Western District Conference lost five congregations and 348 members since 2003. It now has 66 congregations and 10,409 members. Conference minister Dorothy Nickel Friesen of Newton, Kan., says these numbers can be misleading, because they do not account for five church plants within the conference. Church plants that have not become formally recognized as congregations are not included in the directory tally in any conference. Since 2003, Friesen says, Western District also has had one congregation close and two others withdraw from the conference. Friesen said age is another factor for the conference.

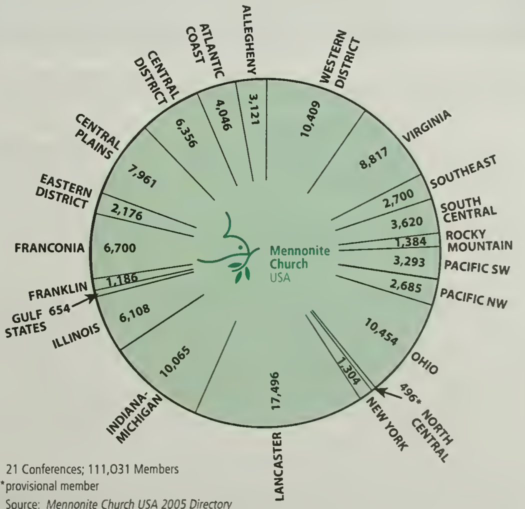
"Our membership is slightly declining overall for the whole district because of the declining population of [older members]," she says. However, Friesen believes the conference will grow with time because of its emphasis on outreach and starting new congregations.

Ron Byler, associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA, says he believes membership numbers have stabilized churchwide and soon will begin to grow as the denomination embraces its missional challenge.

"We certainly grieve the loss of those congregations, but many of them were not participating at a very high level," says Byler, who edited the new directory. "Many were on the fringes of the church anyway. … I fully expect membership numbers [for Mennonite Church USA] to grow."

We certainly grieve the loss of those congregations, but many of them were not participating at a very high level.
—Ron Byler

Continued on page 22



21 Conferences; 111,031 Members
*provisional member
Source: *Mennonite Church USA 2005 Directory*

Finding Christ at an Israeli drug fest

Israeli students share gospel with thousands at annual New Age gathering.

Helicopters fly overhead and trance music blares among the sea of tents set up of for the New Age festival in Israel. Every year, as many as 40,000 young Israelis flock to Boombamella, a festival held during Jewish Passover, on a beach along the Mediterranean Sea. They come to enjoy music, meditation and a wide array of spiritual options available.

It was among the drug haze enveloping the camp that 22-year-old Laon, an atheist from birth, found faith in the Messiah.

Since 2001, a worker for Mennonite Mission Network* has been taking a group of students from Israel Bible College, where he teaches, to set up a Messianic Jewish tent at Boombamella. He has been the primary organizer of this group since its inception. This year, from April 25 to 28, a record 108 believers camped out at Boombamella. They offered free evangelistic booklets and New Testaments to passers-by and carried on conversations about faith during the entire festival.

"Our students attend these festivals out of the burning desire within them for the salvation of all Israel," says the worker. Over the years, the group has shared the gospel with thousands of festival attendees who have shown interest in Jesus as the Messiah. Some, like Laon, have experienced changed lives as a result of this ministry.

Moshe, an Israel Bible College student who attended the festival in 2003, wrote an account of Laon's experience. Laon was not seeking God when he came to Boombamella in 2003. Since the age of 17, he had been involved in the drug and party culture prevalent among Israeli youth. Like many of his peers, Laon had come to the festival as an act of rebellion against Israel's consumerist society. Disillusioned with the materialism that surrounds them, many Israeli youth search for meaning through New Age activities and Eastern spiritualism, both of which are offered at Boombamella.

While there, Laon took LSD, but it had no immediate effect. However, 10 hours later, while hanging out with friends, a sudden wave of paranoia swept over Laon. He paced the campgrounds, feeling as though everyone he passed was cursing him.

Laon's mind went back to the previous day. His brother had accidentally eaten a piece of cardamom spice, called "chel" in Hebrew, and warned Laon not to try it. Laon mistook the word "chel" for "hell." Those words of warning, "Don't try hell," came back to Laon in full force. Laon cried out, "Oh God, I'm sorry. Forgive me!" In that second, his "bad trip" ended.

As Laon fell to his knees and wept, a cleansing sensation washed over him. Later, as he wandered around the festival, two evangelists from the Messianic group spotted him because of the frog emblazoned on his shirt. The gospel tracts the evangelists carried also had pictures of a frog, which provided a natural springboard for approaching Laon. As they handed the tract to Laon, the evangelists told him about God's love and forgiveness through Jesus. Laon listened with excitement, knowing these people would have answers for him.

Laon is now a student at Israel Bible College and shares Moshe's passion for spreading the gospel. *—Laura Kraybill of Mennonite Mission Network*

Our students attend these festivals out of the burning desire within them for the salvation of all Israel.

—Mennonite Mission Network worker

**For security purposes the Mennonite Mission Network worker is not identified by name.*

Seeking Peace:
The Courage to Be Nonviolent

Sept. 8-11, 2005 — Indianapolis, Indiana

Members and friends of the Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA and The Society of Friends are warmly invited to take part in an energizing, multi-faceted, intergenerational gathering, designed to provide opportunities to build mentoring relationships and explore practical and intellectual approaches to peace and peacemaking.

Contributing organizations include the Plowshares Peace Studies Collaborative of Earlham, Goshen and Manchester Colleges, Every Church a Peace Church, Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes, Mennonite Church USA Peace Advocate, On Earth Peace Assembly, Quaker House-Fayetteville/Ft. Bragg, N.C., and Christian Peacemaker Teams.

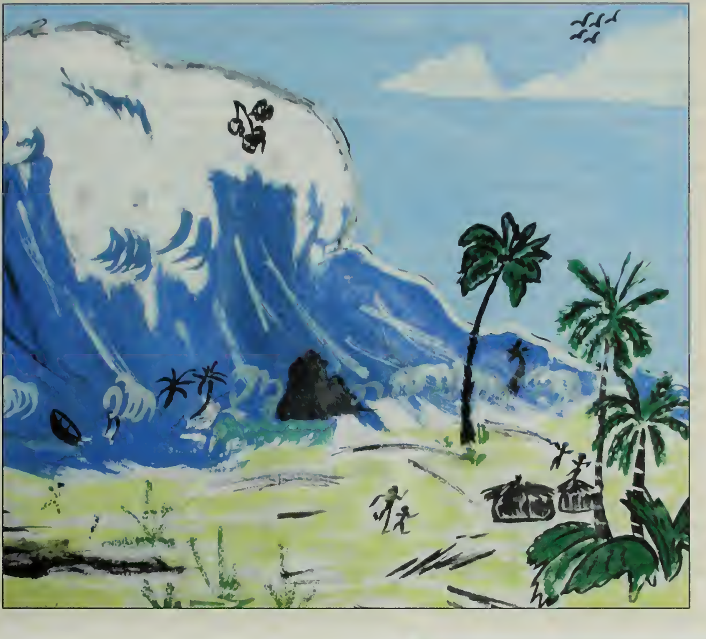
Conference goals:

- To feed the soul of the peacemaker by providing practical resources.
- To energize the peacemaker through workshops and dynamic, biblical worship
- To build up the communities of peacemakers by providing a place to share stories and to create networks
- To help us better understand the current powers and principalities and build affinity networks in the struggle to change them
- To address issues of peace and justice and how to maintain a healthy peace witness and community

Topics and themes:

- Thoughts and preparation for long-term work
- History of the Peace Churches and Peace movements
- Alliances, long term assets and energy
- Healthy peacemaking communities based in knowledge, connections and relationships
- New realities and perspectives
- The work of principalities and powers
- Consumerism
- Media

Information about the conference is available online at:
www.plowsharesproject.org/HistoricPeaceChurchConference



Wall of water

In the tsunami-devastated Andaman and Nicobar islands off the coast of India, Mennonite Central Committee worker Carolyn Heggen taught teachers trauma healing techniques, including painting and drawing, to help students process the horrors they had seen. A middle-school teacher then gave Heggen pictures her students had created of the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami and the devastation it caused. This one was painted by 13-year-old Sirajuddin. Artwork by six more students can be viewed online at www.mcc.org./asiaearthquake.

Heggen's work in trauma healing was part of MCC's more than $12 million response to the tsunami. MCC and its partner agencies in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India are continuing projects to help survivors rebuild their homes and lives. For more information, click on www.mcc.org/asiaearthquake.—*MCC News Service*

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Notice

After June 1, subscriptions for *The Mennonite* will be managed from Goshen, Ind., instead of from Mennonite Publishing Network in Scottdale, Pa. The toll-free number (800-790-2498) will remain the same. If you experience a problem with your subscription or your account after June 1, please call Rebecca Helmuth at 574-535-6052, or email Rebecca@TheMennonite.org, or send a letter to *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526.

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Mennonite Education Agency faces deficit

Firstfruits funding system asks congregations to give 50 percent 'overnight.'

In early April, the Mennonite Education Agency, umbrella organization for schools, colleges, universities and seminaries that relate to Mennonite Church USA, projected that it would end its current fiscal year on June 30 with a $50,000 deficit. Its funding model, proposed by the schools in 2001, seems to be the problem.

"This model requires that congregations contribute about 50 percent of our budget and our educational institutions the other half," MEA executive director Carlos Romero said in an April 5 memo to area conference ministers.

"In the structure of both Mennonite Board of Education (former Mennonite Church) and Higher Education Council (former General Conference Mennonite Church)," Romero said, "that wasn't the case. The congregations weren't expected to give. So we were required to change from asking for 0 percent to asking for 50 percent, overnight."

Ted Stuckey, director of administration for Mennonite Church USA's executive leadership, agrees that significant adjustments will be required in some parts of the new denominational funding system.

"Changes in congregational funding go slow," Stuckey says. "[Denominational] leadership was not certain that ... the church could support MEA at 50 percent. Long-term—if we work together—maybe we'll be able to [fund half of MEA's budget]."

The funding model for MEA was put forth by the Education Integration Committee and approved by the delegate assembly at Nashville 2001.

MEA's current operating budget is $848,000. Romero and his staff began contacting congregations and individuals in early April with an appeal for help. By May 1, Romero said the anticipated deficit still stood at $40,000-45,000.

According MEA records, there were 14,935 students in the 39 MEA-related schools during the 2004-2005 school year, up slightly from the 14,885 in 2003-2004.—*Everett J. Thomas*

2005 Directory

Continued from page 19

In terms of overall membership in the pews, 13 conferences experienced net declines, while eight experienced net growth. Illinois Mennonite Conference led in growth, with a gain of 427 members.—*Robert Rhodes of* Mennonite Weekly Review

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Sing the Journey

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Faith & Life Resources
A division of Mennonite Publishing Network
Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

MPN sees turnaround in three years

Downsizing, cost-containment leaves agency with $432,825 net worth.

Three years ago, Mennonite Publishing Network had a negative net worth of $67,965. At the conclusion of its most recent fiscal year on Jan. 30, MPN's net worth stood at a positive $432,825—a $500,790 difference to the good.

"Part of the turnaround can be attributed to the downsizing [in 2002]," says MPN's executive director Ron Rempel. "We've been doing a lot of cost-containment as well."

In the 12 months after January 2002, MPN reduced the number of staff working at its publishing divisions from 70 to 43. These totals do not include staffing at MPN's Provident Bookstore chain.

MPN was able to conclude its most recent fiscal year on the positive side of the ledger even while sales through the Provident Bookstore chain fell significantly from the previous year. Bookstore sales last year totaled $10,497,583, which is down $586,826 from the previous year. Sales were also down in Faith & Life Resources, the second-largest division. Sales were up slightly, however, in the Herald Press division.

As a binational program, Mennonite Publishing Network is accountable to both Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA through the Joint Executive Committee. At the JEC's Feb. 11-12 meeting, MPN leaders said that the contributions they have been receiving from across the church—totaling $204,591 last year—were a "stop-gap measure," and their goal is to continue to trim the organization to a size that can be maintained by projected revenue.

"There was a corresponding drop in sales during [the past three years]," Rempel says. "There was a fairly high [level of] donations during the 'barn-raising campaign' years. We've stopped using the barn-raising theme and have been focusing on the new curriculum that is coming."

Rempel says MPN will launch some major market research into the use and nonuse of Mennonite curriculum by Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA congregations. *Gather Round* is the name of the new curriculum, scheduled to replace *Jubilee* in 2006.

One of the challenges facing MPN relates to its Provident Bookstore chain—the division that was expected to help MPN emerge from its financial troubles in 2002. According to MPN leaders, religious bookstores are facing stiff competition from mainstream retail outlets. Consequently, MPN may make changes in the Provident chain to give priority to congregational resources and Herald Press books.

During the past three years, MPN has been able to make its debt-reduction payments as scheduled. In January 2004, MPN's long-term debt was $3,080,995, but by this January was reduced to $2,770,479.

As part of MPN's efforts to reduce expenses, the publishing house in Scottdale, Pa., has been listed in the local real estate market. In the meantime, Curt Horst has been named operations manager for the Scottdale facility (see News Digest, May 3).

For the past two years and in the current year, MPN has agreed to provide an annual Firstfruits contribution of $25,000. The Firstfruits contribution is divided between Mennonite Church Canada's General Board and Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Part of the turnaround can be attributed to the downsizing. We've been doing a lot of cost-containment as well.—Ron Rempel

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WORKERS

Peak, Michael, ended April 17 as associate pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bartel, Evelyn Rain Keim, Feb. 22, to Ryan and Tonya Keim Bartel, Overland Park, Kan.

Brubacher, Hailey Louise and Katie Richelle (twins), April 16, to Luke and Becky Binkley Brubacher, Elmira, Ont.

Buller, Avrom Jacob, April 8, to Tom and Karla Yoder Buller, Hesston, Kan.

Click, Aden James, April 7, to Erick and Amee Yoder Click, Goshen, Ind.

Derstine, Eric James, April 28, to David and Tammy Nyce Derstine, Harleysville, Pa.

Ebright-Zehr, Aidan James, April 12, to Marcus and Robin Ebright-Zehr, Goshen, Ind.

Godshall, Norah Elizabeth, March 6, to Steve and Sarah Godshall, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hunsberger, Kyan James, April 8, to Kyle and Tina Hunsberger, St. Louis.

Jordan, Spencer Carter, April 7, to Brendan and Mary Beth Mast Jordan, Uniontown, Ohio.

Melhem, Gregory John David, April 4, to Gregory and Amanda Musselman Melhem, Easton, Pa.

Miller, Isaac Pierre, April 19, to Lance and Rhonda Miller, Iowa City, Iowa.

Reinhart, Zachary David, April 14, to Scott and Melissa Horn Reinhart, Hartville, Ohio.

Richer, Jordon Ross, March 21, to Jerrell and Jane Ross Richer, Sebastopel, Calif.

Schrock, Addison Raine, April 7, to Brent and Andrea Miller Schrock, Hartville, Ohio.

Short, Evan Aaron, April 2, to Joel and Karen Zeiset Short, Smithville, Ohio.

Waring, Samuel French, March 12, to Jeff Waring and Cheryl Stucky, Franklin, Wis.

MARRIAGES

Crossgrove/Mussard: Jana Crossgrove, Archbold, Ohio, and Martin Mussard, Mt. Vernon, Ohio, April 16 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Drescher/Sheaffer: Lori Drescher, Akron, Pa., and Troy Sheaffer, Ephrata, Pa., April 16 at Akron Mennonite Church.

Hughes/Kramer: Michelle Hughes, Harrisonburg, Va., and Steven Kramer, Harrisonburg, March 12 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Lanctot/Wade: Andrew Lanctot, Goshen, Ind., and Caitlin Wade, Goshen, April 2 at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Vogt/Zehr: Doug Vogt, Winchester, Va., and Darcy Zehr, Winchester, Nov. 20, 2004 at Stephens City (Va.) Mennonite Church.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

A new position with outstanding potential

The Organization:
Mennonite Savings and Credit Union is a progressive and visionary organization. From our beginnings as a shoe-box operation in 1964, we have grown in size to rank 7th among credit unions in Ontario and 30th in Canada. With the experience and momentum we have gained, the organization is well positioned for continued growth. We provide a full range of services to our members and have taken a leading-edge role as a founding partner of Meritas Mutual Funds.

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The Candidate:
Based on a relevant post-secondary education, professional qualifications and experience, you will have demonstrated the ability to accept and succeed in progressively more senior financial management positions. Based on an understanding and commitment to cooperative values and principles, your leadership style will engender confidence through an open and collaborative approach to people and ideas. As a strategist, you will have a solid track record in conceptual thinking that has led to successfully implemented financial advice and decisions.

The Community:
Our credit union has grown up in Southwestern Ontario and its head office resides in a recently constructed and well-equipped facility in Kitchener-Waterloo. Employees live and work in a region that boasts a strong economy renowned for high tech research and innovation. The region has two universities and a community college, and is served by two major hospitals. In addition the area is home to an abundance of diverse cultural and sporting events and facilities.

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Please forward your resume to:
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DEATHS

Bergey, Anna S. Clemmer, 91, Hatfield, Pa., died April 9. Spouse: Willard S. Bergey (deceased). Parents: Howard M. and Lizzie Ann Clemmer. Children: Robert, Harold, Willard, Philip, Janet Frederick, Joan Myers; 19 grandchildren; 35 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Bonen, Pierre E., 56, La Porte, Ind., died April 17 of heart failure. Spouse: Margaret Sheridan Bonen. Parents: Emery and Antonia Eleanore deLangis Bonen. Step-children: Andrew Wilson, Katherine Alvarez; four step-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Hudson Lake Mennonite Church, New Carlisle, Ind.

Brown, Shirley Hagenstoz, 79, Washington, Ill., died April 27. Spouse: John (Tom) Brown (deceased). Parents: John and Sylvia Moehl Hagenstoz. Children: John, Julie Schrock; one grandchild. Funeral: April 30 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Burkholder, Della Hartzler, 88, Smithville, Ohio, died March 22. Spouse: Kenneth W. Burkholder (deceased). Parents: Albert and Sadie Kurtz Hartzler. Children: Ethel Hoffman, Eileen Adams; eight grandchildren. Funeral: March 26 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville.

Byler, Mildred, 92, Wooster, Ohio, died March 5. Parents: Alvin and Nettie Seigley Byler. Funeral: March 8 at Wayne County Care Center, Wooster.

Clemmer, Cyrus M., 84, Souderton, Pa., died April 17. Spouse: Arlene D. Nyce Clemmer. Parents: Allen L. and Alice Moyer Clemmer. Children: Joyce Munro, Judith Stoltzfus, Timothy, James, Mark; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 22 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Conrad, Lester Leroy, 74, Wooster, Ohio, died April 8. Parents: Orie M. and Goldie Byler Conrad. Funeral: April 11 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Duerksen, Mildor P., 83, Inman, Kan., died April 11. Spouse: H. Bernice Unrau Duerksen. Parents: C.R. and Martha Funk Duerksen. Children: Larry, Brian, Merle, John; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 14 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson, Kan.

Earnest, Elsie Stutzman, 100, Kalona, Iowa, died April 11. Spouse: Elmer Earnest (deceased). Parents: John and Mary Birkey Stutzman. Children: Arlene Kremer, Ina Rediger, Ruth Leichty, Don, Ron; 18 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 14 at First Mennonite Church, Iowa City, Iowa.

Engbrecht, Joan Hagen, 68, Freeman, S.D., died April 15 due to complications from Alzheimer's disease. Spouse: Robert Engbrecht. Parents: Simon and Agnes Suderman Hagen. Funeral: April 18 at Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, Freeman.

Fulkerson, Justin, 19, Newton, Kan., died Feb. 27. Parents: Mark and Diane Schierling Fulkerson. Funeral: March 4 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Graber, Mildred Klopfenstein, 81, Washington, Iowa, died April 8 of a brain aneurysm. Spouse: Wilbert Graber (deceased). Parents: R. Glenn and Bessie Roth Klopfenstein. Children: Elaine Gingerich, Leon, Myron; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 11 at Washington Mennonite Church.

Grieser, Ivan, , Archbold, Ohio, died Feb. 1. Spouse: Kathryn Wyse Grieser. Parents: Daniel and Rosa Beck Grieser. Children: Dan, Tim, Mary Prather, Elizabeth Miller, Anne Rex; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 5 at Fairlawn Chapel, Archbold.

Helmuth, Lizzie Ann Schrock, 89, Jacksonville, Fla., died March 30. Spouse: Joe Helmuth. Parents: Yost and Tillie Miller Schrock. Children: Mal, Sharon Swearingen, Shirl Forgione; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 2 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

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Hookway, Judith Yoder, 53, Iowa, died April 12 of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Jerry Stutzman, (2nd) Rick Hookway. Parents: Keith and Della Troyer Yoder. Children: Carisa Funk, Mariah Stutzman; one grandchild. Funeral: April 15 at Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Horst, Elva Snider, 87, St. Jacobs, Ont., died April 25. Spouse: David Horst. Parents: Elias and Sarah Bechtel Snider. Children: Marlene Good, Linda Frey, Jeanette Seiling; 10 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Hostetler, Velma Troyer, 89, Smithville, Ohio, died March 15. Spouse: George Hostetler (deceased). Parents: John and Lucinda Stutzman Troyer. Children: Leora Gerber, Loren, Arlen; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 21 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville.

Hower, Royal J. (R.J.), 80, Goshen, Ind., died April 14 of respiratory failure. Spouse: Florence Goodman Hower. Parents: George M. and Gladys Inbody Hower. Children: Luisa Berdejo, Samuel; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Martin, Joseph B., 91, Duchess, Alberta, died Feb. 9. Spouse: Ruth E. Ramer Martin. Parents: Sam and Olive Martin. Children: Joseph, Dale, Marian Shantz, Linda Lauber; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 14 at Duchess Mennonite Church.

Mayer, Lydia E. Gunden, 83, Sarasota, Fla., died March 15. Spouse: Clayton Mayer. Parents: Solomon and Rosetta Gunden Steckley. Children: Marilyn Beachy, Cynthia Brubacher, C.J., Janice Glanzer (deceased); 15 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 18 at Bahia Vista Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Miller, Andrew, 25, Wellman, Iowa, died April 11 in a car accident. Parents: Kenton and Barb Kinsinger Miller. Funeral: April 14 at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Miller, D. Nadine Bontrager, 75, Goshen, Ind., died April 26 of pneumonia. Spouse: Ben J. Miller. Parents: Oliver and Verna Hershberger Bontrager. Children: Judy Cooper, Jane Miller Leatherman; stepchildren: Jan, Wilma Weaver; 15 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchiildren; three great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 30 at Zion Chapel, Goshen.

Mishler, Lloyd, 89, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died April 25. Spouse: Evelyn Miller Mishler (deceased). Parents: Emery aend Sarah Immel Mishler. Children: Elaine Hyer, Colin Mishler; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Moyer, Susan D. Hackman, 92, Souderton, Pa., died April 13. Spouse: Edwin B. Moyer (deceased). Parents: Joseph W. and Katie Derstine Hackman. Children: Mary H., Early, Clyde; six grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Moyer, Walter B., 89, Souderton, Pa., died April 10. Spouse: Stella H. Freed Moyer. Parents: Benjamin and Annie Benner Moyer. Children: Mildred F. Trauger, Earl F.; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 15 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Niehage, Edna Borth, 90, Moundridge, Kan., died April 18. Spouse: Reiny Niehage (deceased). Parents: John and Emilie Flegel Borth. Children: Nancy Krehbiel, Wayne, Peggy Strausz, Pat Krehbiel; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 21 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

Opdycke, Frances Miller, 87, Archbold, Ohio, died April 18. Spouse: Willard Opdycke (deceased). Parents: George and Lena Deriot Miller. Funeral: April 22 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Roth, Richard L., 79, Washington, Ill., died April 14. Spouse: Lorna Heyl Roth (deceased). Parents: Bryson and Sada Schertz Roth. Children: Dave, Nancy; one grandchild. Funeral: April 16 at Mason-White Funeral Home, Washington.

Stuckey, Howard, 82, Hicksville, Ohio, died April 3. Spouse: Leatha Hershberger Stuckey. Parents: William and Leah Leichty Stuckey. Children: Dennis, Stan, Keith, Randy, Deborah Kurtz; 15 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 6 at North Leo Mennonite Church, Leo-Cedarville, Ind.

Swartzendruber, Erma Schwartzentruber, 92, Bay Port, Mich., died April 17. Spouse: Edwin Swartzendruber (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Lydia Reist Schwartzentruber. Children: Harold, Jean Reich; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 20 at Michigan Avenue Mennonite Church, Pigeon, Mich.

Thiessen, Marie G. Zuercher, 82, Everett, Wa., died April 9. Spouse: Harold P. Thiessen (deceased). Parents: Noah and Rena Etta Zuercher. Children: Renette Davis, Rosilyn Switzer, Jonathon, Michael, Richard, Douglas, Connie Jackson; 19 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: April 15 at Seattle (Wa.) Mennonite Church.

Widrick, Patrick A., 42, Lowville, N.Y., died Jan. 10 of cystic fibrosis. Parents: Sherwood and Rachel Widrick. Funeral: Jan. 13 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Yoder, George E., 81, North Canton, Ohio, died April 10. Spouse: Betty M. Yoder. Parents: P.J. and Martha Yoder. Children: Barbara E. Snyder, Russ L.; three grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Memorial service: April 15 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

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Daniel also

- co-edited *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (IMS 2004), documenting an unprecedented study of how people from different cultures read and interpret the same scripture passage.
- is working on a volume of Mennonite perspectives on pastoral care and counseling, doing research on chaplaincy and collaborating with counseling professors in other institutions around the world.

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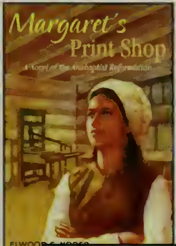

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Philhaven, a faith-based, nonprofit, free-standing behavioral health organization, is seeking a ***full-time Pennsylvania Dutch speaking therapist*** to work with people from the Plain Community in the Lancaster/ Lebanon/ York/ Harrisburg, Pa., area. The Amish are building a residence on grounds for people needing outpatient follow up after inpatient treatment. This position will begin on July 1, 2005. Master's degree and mental health experience preferred. Benefits include 401(k) with company match, medical, dental, educational assistance, paid vacation, etc. Send cover letter and resumé: Human Resources, Philhaven, P.O. Box 550, Mt. Gretna, PA 17064. Fax 717-270-2455. Email hr@philhaven.org. Visit our Web site at www.philhaven.com.

Mennonite Church USA Communications is inviting applications for the position of ***creative manager***. Working closely with a team of professional communicators, the creative manager leads and coordinates the writing, graphic design, print production and media creation functions for the denomination. This full- or part-time position will be based either in MC USA's Great Plains office in Newton, Kan., or its Great Lakes office in Elkhart, Ind. The successful candidate will have experience in communications or marketing, strong writing skills and a track record for managing multiple priorities and detailed projects.

To apply for this position, submit a letter, resumé and writing samples to Barth Hague, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46526, or BarthH@MennoniteUSA.org. Position open until filled.

Chicago Mennonite Learning Center *teaching positions* for 2005-2006. Are you looking for a teaching ministry that will reap rewards and bring satisfaction? Do you really want to make a difference in the lives of children? Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, a K-8 Christian Mennonite school in the heart of Chicago, is looking for teachers for the 2005-2006 school year. Chicago Mennonite Learning Center serves a diverse, mostly non-Mennonite Christian student population and enjoys strong parental involvement. We are looking for teachers for a number of grade levels, including Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2 and 4, plus special interest teachers, including music.

Send resumés or letters of inquiry by email or snail mail to Ken Hawkley, Principal, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632; phone 773-735-9304; email khawkley@chicagomennonite.org.

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Lake Center Christian Schools seek applicants for the following full-time positions beginning August 2005: ***development director, media center director, guidance counselor, band instructor, junior high Bible instructor, junior high science instructor, high school English language arts instructor, high school math instructor***. Also, part-time positions available: ***kindergarten instructor, gifted instructor***. LCCS is located between Akron and Canton, Ohio, one hour south of Cleveland. The school is owned and operated by area Mennonite churches and enrolls 525 students, K-10. Eleventh grade will be added this year and 12th grade in 2006. Send resumé to or contact Matthew R. McMullen, Superintendent, Lake Center Christian Schools, 12893 Kaufman Ave. NW, Hartville, OH 44632. Fax 330-877-2040, email lccsmmcmullen@yahoo.com, phone 330-877-2049.

Eastern Mennonite University invites applications for the ***head men's and women's volleyball coach*** from candidates who show ability to model and articulate a Christian philosophy of coaching and leadership. Coaching both teams sequentially constitutes a full-time position with benefits and the possibility of additional responsibilities in teaching for the appropriately qualified coach. Responsibilities include recruiting, operating and managing all aspects of a quality D-III program. Master's degree in physical education or related field and college coaching experience preferred; or bachelor's degree and at least three years as highly successful head coach required. Salary determined by education and experience. Please send letter of application, curriculum vitae and graduate transcripts (unofficial acceptable), a response to application questions and the names and contact information of three references to Greg Steffen, Interim Athletic Director, 1200 Park Rd., Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Application materials are available via the Internet at www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/coachmenandwomenvball.htm. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Editor sought for **Timbrel** magazine for Mennonite women and annual Bible study. Qualifications include ability to envision publication content, work independently and with dispersed team. Half-time position begins summer 2005; may be based at home, flexible hours. See www.MennoniteWomenUSA.org/New.asp. Contact Rhoda Keener, rhodak@mennonitewomenusa.org, 717-532-9723.

Warwick River Christian School Inc., a growing Mennonite-sponsored school with 350 students from K3 thru grade 8, is seeking one or two qualified applicants for ***administrator and director of development*** to replace Gordon Zook, who plans to retire this summer. A vision for Christ-centered education and relevant experience in education, administration and/or development is required. Contact Lynn Showalter, 252 Lucas Creek Rd., Newport News, VA 23602; or LJShowalter@aol.com.

Eastern Mennonite University, *director of libraries*. Provide leadership and coordination to planning, budgeting, organizing and staffing the library. MLS required. A graduate degree in another discipline preferred. Theological studies essential. EMU seeks people who are supportive of Anabaptist/Mennonite Christian faith practices. Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Provost, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, or email provost@emu.edu. Position open immediately. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

Position open immediately: **Spruce Lake Retreat**, a dynamic, multifaceted camp and retreat ministry affiliated with the Mennonite Church, seeks mission-minded person for the full-time position of ***maintenance technician***, serving on Spruce Lake's maintenance team responsible for the upkeep and development of grounds and buildings. Applicant shall be a team player and have experience/training in building trades and/or groundskeeping skills. Competitive wage and liberal benefits package. On-camp housing may be available. Spruce Lake is located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania. Send resumé to Facilities Director, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email personnel@sprucelake.org

Mennonite Church Canada invites applications for the position of ***general secretary***.

The general secretary is the chief executive officer of Mennonite Church Canada's denominational offices, accountable to the General Board and responsible for the total program of Mennonite Church Canada. This full-time position is located in Winnipeg.

This position functions in a dynamic, exciting and community-oriented ministry environment. It requires an energetic, creative and organized team player. The incumbent will be responsible for developing and implementing a strategic plan consistent with the vision and mission of Mennonite Church Canada; providing excellence in leadership to staff; managing financial, human and physical resources; relating effectively with constituencies; providing support to the General Board and pursuing continuing education and self-care. This position requires considerable travel within Canada and occasional travel outside Canada. The preferred starting date is January 2006.

The successful candidate is a person of vision, has excellent oral, written and interpersonal communication skills, and strong leadership and team-building abilities. Education, work experience and computer skills suitable to the responsibilities of this ministry are required.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church.

The job description is posted at www.mennonitechurch.ca/get-involved/jobs/. Inquiries, nominations and applications can be directed to Henry Krause, Moderator, c/o Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4 (204-888-6781; toll-free 866-888-6785) or email hkrause@uniserve.com . Applications will be processed starting June 24.

Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore.; positions beginning August 2005.

Western seeks a ***social science teacher*** and ***English teacher*** for upper-level classes, with an Anabaptist faith perspective to lead respective high school departments. Drama and/or coaching experience valued.

Western, established in 1945, offers grades 6-12 and serves students from several states/provinces and from around the world. Located on 45 acres in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Western offers a strong academic and faith-building experience. We are seeking exceptional candidates with a heart for youth and sharing Christ. Contact Darrel White at 866-343-9378 or djwhite@westernmennoniteschool.org.

Hesston College and Mennonite Disaster Service seek a ***full-time director of the Disaster Management Program*** at Hesston College to begin July 2005. Primary responsibilities include: developing and administering the program, recruiting and admitting students, advising students, teaching courses and directing field experiences. Qualifications: teaching experience, innovative spirit, love of students and commitment to Mennonite higher education, the Mennonite church and the missions of Hesston College and Mennonite Disaster Service. Master's degree required, doctorate desired. Please send a letter of application, resumé and reference list to Marc Yoder, Academic Dean, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062, marcusy@hesston.edu. Review of applications will begin May 16 and continue until the position is filled. Equal Opportunity Employer.

Mennonite Central Committee is looking for a ***human resources director,*** based in Akron, Pa. The director leads a 14-member department that carries out much of the human resource function of MCC, including recruitment, screening, placement, training and care of workers; compensation and benefits administration; personnel policy development and maintenance of personnel data. Qualifications include experience in personnel management and administration, knowledge of human resources policies, practices and tools, and solid skills in writing, problem-solving and negotiation. Cross-cultural experience and prior Christian service preferred. Candidates from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and /or bilingual (Spanish/English) candidates, and women are encouraged to apply. Contact Prem Dick (psd@mcc.org) for a copy of the job description.

Goshen College invites nominations and/or applications for the position of ***president***, expected to assume office sometime between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006.

Goshen College is a fully accredited four-year, liberal arts college located in Goshen, Ind., affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Additional information about the college can be located at www.goshen.edu.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate for president will exhibit three essential qualities: embrace and energetically promote the mission of the college, "to educate servant leaders for the church and the world"; support and implement the strategic priorities of the institution, including Goshen College's new strategic plan; embody core values of the college and exemplify a mature and vibrant Christian faith, characterized by the gifts of the Spirit.

A terminal degree from an accredited college or university is expected.

Search process: Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or resumé may be submitted to Rick Stiffney, Chairman of the Search Committee, at andreab@mennoniteeducation.org, or through postal mail to GC Presidential Search Committee, Mennonite Education Agency, 63846 County Road 35 Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621.

The search committee will begin reviewing applications in Spring 2005 and continue until the position is filled.

Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

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Coffee shop conversationalism

Gordon Houser

To be people of amazing grace is to see ourselves as recipients of unowed kindness and understanding, and if we really believe it's been lavished upon us undeservedly, maybe we can lavish a little upon the people we find ourselves least inclined to view generously.—David Dark, *The Gospel According to America*

Perhaps most of us can agree that American society is rife with disagreement. Or maybe you don't like that word "rife." Let's say, many Americans disagree.

And, we may agree, that disagreement seems to be getting more and more vehement—less polite.

David Dark is a writer who teaches at a Christian high school in Nashville, Tenn. His first book, *Everyday Apocalypse: The Sacred Revealed in Radiohead, the Simpsons and Other Pop Culture Icons* (Brazos Press, 2002, $13.99), looked at varied ways God is revealed (the meaning of "apocalypse") in our culture. While some may find it difficult to read, it's full of interesting, incisive insights. For example, here's one quote: "Neither Jesus nor any Jewish prophet ever instructed his listeners to repent 'spiritually.'"

Now Dark has written a new book that should be more accessible, and it's even better. *The Gospel According to America: A Meditation on a God-blessed, Christ-haunted Idea* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, $14.95) is, he writes, "an effort in moral orientation, an attempt to make sense of the times, and, if you like, a project in anger management." That describes something we need.

He writes of the hope and comfort his father derived from what Dark calls "Waffle House Conversationalism," people sitting in a coffee shop, talking in a boisterous, friendly manner about many topics. "You're welcome to bring the Bible or the president into it, but if you don't keep your ego at a reasonable volume, you can take your conversation elsewhere." In such a setting, people want to hear a good laugh and a truthful word.

Those two elements—comedy and truth—describe the gospel, God's good news. And both are sorely missing in an American culture full of meanspiritedness. Most people listen only to those whose views they like and either ignore or lash out at those whose views they dislike.

Dark does not mince words. He writes: "If we have a steadily narrowing vision of people to whom we're willing to accord respect or if the company we keep is slowly diminishing to include only the folks who've learned to pretend to agree with us, we can be assured that we're in danger of developing around ourselves a kind of death cult, a frightened, trigger-happy defensiveness that is neither godly nor, in the best sense, American."

Dark distinguishes the gospel of Jesus from America—or any culture—and calls it "a rogue element within history, a demythologizing virus that will undermine the false gods of any culture that would presume to contain it."

If he sounds Anabaptist, it's on purpose. I met Dark last month at the Associated Church Press in Nashville. While he attends a Presbyterian church, he describes himself as "a high-church Anabaptist."

He's also a keen observer of popular media culture in America and points out that, driven by viewer ratings, it "has reached a fever pitch that views thoughtfulness as weakness and a changed mind as treachery." Such a milieu makes healthy coffee shop conversation difficult.

Dark challenges the equation of America and gospel. He agrees with Harold Bloom that "'knowing' Jesus, believing yourself to have a one-on-one relationship with him (unmediated by tradition; 'in the garden alone' ...) is a recently developed form of gnosticism that is the ... American religion."

Jesus' gospel calls us to a different way, "to pray for, love and radically seek the welfare of anyone we've come to view as the enemy."

Sitting in a coffee shop with people with whom we disagree is a countercultural, gospel act.

FILMS

Born into Brothels (R), which won this year's Oscar for best documentary, shows the work of photographer Zana Briski, who lived among prostitutes in Calcutta and began teaching some of their children photography. They show promise, and she tries to get them out of poverty and into schools. Like her, we fall in love with these children and experience hope and heartbreak at what happens.

Millions (PG) is a postmodern fable. Its theme is faith, but the faith it affirms is not necessarily reasonable or even real. A young boy in England knows all about saints and has conversations with them. When a bag full of cash falls into his lap, he wants to give it to the poor, while his older brother wants to spend it and make more. With its jump cuts and its mixture of humor and suspense, the film is delightful. It promotes justice and condemns the power of money. The ending is moving, but it turns on a wish rather than a reality.

BOOKS

Beliefs: Mennonite Faith and Practice by John D. Roth (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) is an irenic, clear account of what Mennonites believe and how that compares with what other Christians believe. Roth presents the basics of Mennonite belief and addresses common critiques of those beliefs, e.g., that Mennonites stress a works righteousness. While this is not cutting-edge theology, the reader comes to see that Mennonite beliefs can seem radical in our culture. At the same time, Roth points out that "Christian faith in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition is a dynamic process." He acknowledges Mennonites' shortcomings and where we disagree with each other yet emphasizes our commonality. He gives a healthy attention to "faith as discipleship," a Mennonite distinctive, and writes that "following Jesus is a commitment to participate in God's transforming, redemptive work in the world." This is a useful, helpful book for those new to the faith or who want to share it.

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Everett J. Thomas

The Mennonite voice

Assuming that delegates to Charlotte 2005 will ratify a bylaw change approved by Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board, *The Mennonite* will finally have a home within this young denomination. We hope that happens.

When General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church delegates took action to create this magazine in 1997, there was no such thing yet as Mennonite Church USA. So this magazine began its existence before Mennonite Church USA—and its bylaws—were formed. A new bylaw added to those adopted by delegates in 2001 will formally establish this ministry as Mennonite Church USA's official periodical (see box).

This proposed bylaw not only formalizes our eight-year-old mission statement, it also articulates several goals for the first time. The goals were suggested by our board of directors and by the Executive Board. We are eager to learn whether these are the goals delegates want for us.

The first goal is to provide a forum for the voices within the denomination. This already is the reality for us; *The Mennonite* is where the many perspectives within our church are voiced. The articles and columns we select are part of this "forum of voices," but the letters section (Readers Say) is the most-open; anyone may publish there as long as the content is in compliance with our policies. Often the perspectives of those who write make other members and leaders uncomfortable. But this diversity is a mirror that reminds us of the complexity in this organism called church.

Executive Board and executive leadership members requested the second goal: to promote the ministries of and support identity-building for Mennonite Church USA. This goal makes sense to us, but we will be curious to learn whether delegates concur. Each year when we survey our readers we ask what kind of articles they want. Each year news about Mennonite Church USA is rated as the lowest priority. But we know that a strong identity for our fledgling denomination is critically important to its viability. As the official periodical for Mennonite Church USA, we know that a strong identity for members will ultimately engender loyalty to our denomination. That will help *The Mennonite* as well.

The last goal establishes some latitude for our reporting and editorializing: to offer an editorial voice distinctive from but collaborative with other leadership voices within Mennonite Church USA.

We believe this goal carries significant value for our readers but wonder whether delegates will agree. Without an editorial voice distinct from executive leadership, *The Mennonite* will be little more than the voice of denominational leaders. So while we want to be collaborative with other leaders in the church, we believe it is important that *The Mennonite* also be authorized—by the church—to carry a distinctive voice.

It is this distinctive voice that usually causes discomfort among some leaders. Furthermore, some readers occasionally are confused because they think we are speaking for denominational leaders or for the denomination. But we are not.

While there is no such thing as pure objectivity, we report on what is happening in our denomination from a position outside the structures. It is that "objective distance" we claim. We believe that is what our readers want: a voice that is committed to Mennonite Church USA but not controlled by those leading the denomination.—*ejt*

Our readers want a voice that is committed to Mennonite Church USA but not controlled by those leading the denomination.

Mennonite Church USA Bylaws
Proposed Change
Article X. 4. a

The Mennonite. There shall be a self-supporting entity that produces a denominational magazine (dba [doing business as] The Mennonite, Inc.). Its board of directors shall be responsible to the Executive Board. Its mission is to help readers glorify God, grow in faith and become agents of healing and hope in our world. Its goals are to:

- provide a forum for the voices within the denomination,
- promote the ministries of and support identity-building for Mennonite Church USA,
- offer an editorial voice distinctive from but collaborative with other leadership voices within Mennonite Church USA.

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated June 7.

TheMennonite

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June 7, 2005

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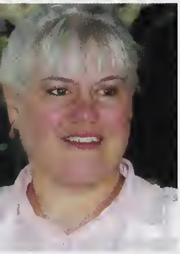
More of God, less of me



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

I attended a three-day, two-night meeting at a Catholic retreat center and thought more about the facilities that housed us than what happened at the meeting.

We were warned ahead of time that the showers were small, but most of us were not prepared for just how small. Someone commented that if they dropped their soap while in the shower, there was little hope of retrieving it, unless one was graced with dexterous toes. Having an opposable thumb located on the foot would also have helped. When we were officially welcomed to the retreat center, we were told the dorms had originally been built with teenage girls in mind. It made us wonder just how small teenage girls were in the 1940s. We experienced hospitality at the retreat center, but these showers certainly were not hospitable to a large person, or even a small person with a case of claustrophobia.

The dorm rooms themselves were adequate, pleasant and simple but far from spacious. One tall person found it impossible to find any spot on the floor with sufficient space to do sit-ups. There was enough room for two people in a room, but at times it felt necessary to choreograph one's movements with the movements of one's roommate so the two did not run into one another.

We met for meals and for group sessions in another building. It was a busy place, housing retirees as well as accommodating students and making room for people like us who were attending meetings or retreats. On the second floor of this building, at the top of wide, graceful stairs, we found an amazing contrast to our simple dorm rooms with their tiny showers—the worship space.

What a space this was! One could easily forget that this was merely one part of a bustling, multifunctioning building, for it seemed we had entered a great European cathedral. The ceilings were high, the space was huge and ornate. Light coming in through the stained-glass windows danced on the beauty within. Sound found its way to the ceiling and hung there, suspended, creating space in time much as the room itself created spaciousness within physical space.

I have entered numerous Mennonite worship spaces and encountered a great variety in architecture. I have also worshiped in a variety of Catholic sanctuaries, yet this experience was different. Likely it had to do with the contrast between personal space and space devoted to the worship of God. The experience led me to think about the time and activities we dedicate to self and to God.

We can spend an inordinate amount of time striving toward becoming self-aware and self-confident, when what we really need is to be God-aware and God-confident.

We live in a me-centered culture. Slogans such as, "Be all that you can be" and, "because you're worth it" point us toward self-centeredness. Self-improvement books and seminars abound. Some of these even have the express purpose of making us better servants in God's kingdom. Yet I wonder if God's kingdom is not better served if we spend less time thinking about self and more time thinking about God. We can spend an inordinate amount of time striving toward becoming self-aware and self-confident, when what we really need is to be God-aware and God-confident.

A simple prayer, written by Thomas Merton, sums up these reflections nicely, and I'd like to share it with you: "O God, do not let me take away from you the time that belongs to you in contemplation." TM

TheMennonite

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Mennonite Church USA

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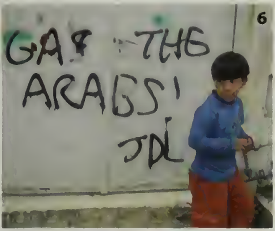
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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Not sons and fathers

I reject the metaphors employed at the recent reconciliation conference in New Holland, Pa., where early Anabaptist leaders are made out to be the rebellious sons of Reformed fathers ("Reconciliation Conference Draws 600," May 3). Such dysfunctional family metaphors together with the appalling therapeutic analysis of presumed contemporary Anabaptist "wounds" and the need for a return of the "sons" to the "fathers" can only prolong and stall the work of true reconciliation.

The members of the Reformed Church, of the Catholic Church, indeed of any church from whom we are denominationally divided, should not be treated as resented parents or rebellious children but as brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we seek friendship and reconciliation. That the unity of Christ's body is already given makes possible a vulnerable discussion of the theological and ethical issues that have not yet been resolved between us: the proper practice of baptism, the relationship of Christians to civil authority and the sword, the nature of the church, to name a few such controversies.*—Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Bluffton, Ohio*

Turnaround at MPN

I was pleased to see that Mennonite Publishing Network is now in the black ("MPN Sees Turnaround in Three Years," May 17). I trust they will use some of their income to live up to their commitment to provide health benefits to former employees. I still regard their reneging on this commitment to be one of the great scandals of the Mennonite Church in recent years.*—Tim Jost, Harrisonburg, Va.*

IN THIS ISSUE

During April and May, 1,235 graduates received degrees from colleges, seminaries and universities that relate to Mennonite Church USA (pages 16-17). Commencement is similar to another ritual central to Mennonite theology: baptism. Marlin Birkey (page 14) considers the relationship between salvation and baptism and says: "Baptism is not ... merely a subsequent visible witness to an already completed internal reality. Rather it is a rite of initiation into salvation." It is around the matter of baptism that Mennonites differ at times from other Christians. But more and more Mennonites are engaging in ecumenical conversations with other Christians in an effort to experience the unity Jesus prays for in John 17. Albert J. Meyer lists some of the questions Mennonites ask when considering communion with other Christians (page 12). Meyer also offers nine guidelines for developing helpful relationships. The editorial (page 32) concludes, then, with a call to honor our Anabaptist distinctives as we interact with and learn from the global Christian community.*—Editors*

Contributions are for development

A news story in the May 17 issue reported that Mennonite Publishing Network leaders referred to $200,000 in contributions last year as a "stopgap measure" and that their goal is to continue to trim the organization to a size that can be maintained by projected revenue. Yes, we are committed to a business plan that covers as much publishing cost as possible from the sale of resources and books. At the same time, we welcome the changing church climate, which recognizes that for some essential church resources, such as a core Sunday school curriculum, contributions are needed to cover development costs as they are incurred. We do not see contributions as a temporary "stopgap measure" but as important and much appreciated support from the church now and in the years ahead.*—Ron Rempel, executive director, Mennonite Publishing Network*

Editor's note: The reference to a "stopgap measure" was attributed to MPN leaders in the minutes from the Joint Executive Committee's Feb. 11-12 meeting. Joint Executive Committee meetings have been closed to the press since 2004.

Advances require universal health care

The Healthcare Access Statement (May 17) clearly states the theology and need for a more effective, just and compassionate system. The statement also has the virtue of offending no one because it offers no specifics for action. The inefficiencies and costs of the current system are causing business leaders to consider options outside their usual political perspectives. A medical scientist concludes that advances in genomics and bioinformatics may mean that "the concept of private health insurance, which is based on actuarially pooling risk within specified, fragmented groups will become obsolete." He concludes that, contrary to all his former beliefs, the only answer now is "a government-sponsored, obviously nonprofit, tax-supported, universal-access, single-payer plan" (*NY Times*, May 22). For prophetic proposals, it looks like we need to look to CEO's and scientists.*—Edgar Metzler, Goshen, Ind.*

Naming rights

Everett J. Thomas' editorial "Naming Rights" (April 19) gives only a partial picture of stewardship. I fear for the future viability of Mennonite institutions if that is the only and complete perspective and theology considered. I agree that if we give with the sense of drawing attention to ourselves for our own glory, then—as Jesus so clearly states in Matthew 6:1-4—"they have received their reward."

There are at least nine pages of articles in that same issue drawing our attention to people who are serving the church and the world. What's the difference in recognizing people serving the church via good works (giving our time and talent) versus giving back resources out of our financial abundance (which our time and talent have probably helped generate)? The point is that there is no real difference. I trust we all give and work and serve in this manner. I also note that only three pages away from the editorial is an ad for "Must-Read Editorials" with Thomas' picture prominently displayed. I'm sure that also is to the greater Glory of God.—*Ron Ringenberg, Middlebury, Ind.*

Wrong to use release

I disagree with the decision to print the news release from BMC NewsNet in the News Digest ("Camp Friedenswald Denies BMC Space," May 17). Printing it in News Digest alongside releases from Mennonite World Conference, Eastern Mennonite Missions, *Equipping* and Mennonite Mission Network implies that BMC is a recognized part of, or partner organization with, Mennonite Church USA. It is not. If *The Mennonite* deemed the decision of the Camp Friedenswald board a newsworthy event, then I would have preferred an article in which the director and/or board chair could have expressed the camp's position, rather than the one-sided press release from BMC.

If someone in BMC wishes to express him or herself, and *The Mennonite* wishes to publish that expression, the Readers Say section is much more appropriate. There is no confusion that thoughts published here are unvarnished personal opinions. News Digest should be reserved for press releases from parts and partners of Mennonite Church USA.—*Craig Maven, Berne, Ind.*

Dating rules

I appreciated the article "Dating Rules" (May 3). But why be surprised that the church gives little guidance or help? The church has mostly reacted to and shamed sexual behavior rather than working at holistic healthy descriptions of maturation and growth in self-understanding as sexual people living in the dynamics of intergender relationships.

Growing in self-understanding of our sexual personhood occurs throughout life. The church needs to celebrate the beauty and joy of sexuality and provide not rules but boundaries for healthy discovering of self and understanding of others. Relating with others of the opposite gender could and should be a joyous opportunity to discover aspects of our own sexual personhood in the context of mutually respectful, self-respectful interactions. Best guidelines for dating will flow out of the most joyous vision for bonding, not out of the most restrictive reactions to excesses. Dangers can be named, but promise should dominate guidance. Anxiety-driven rules will never help people say yes to the truest beauties of sexual personhood, whether they date or marry or not.—*George O'Reilly, Mountain Lake, Minn.*

Ambiguity among Anabaptists

Anabaptists are divided about nonviolence and nonresistance, Karl McKinney said in his well-written article "For Whom Do We Fight?" (April 19). Peace marches, nonviolent resistance and nonresistance apart from Jesus' teaching in the New Testament have become ambiguous in much of Christian literature. McKinney asks, "What is peace without the Messiah? What is justice without the cross? Where is mercy in a world where brewing hatred and self-interests constantly collide?"

Learning again the Anabaptists' way of life during and after the Reformation will bring Christ's answers to these questions. Christ taught that his kingdom is not of this world, implying that his kingdom is based on principles found in Matthew 5, 6 and 7 and in Romans 13:1-7. May Christ help us search the Scriptures and find grace to apply its teachings to our daily lives. For the Holy One who guides the Christian is greater than the Evil One who is in the world.—*Lee H. Kanagy, Belleville, Pa.*

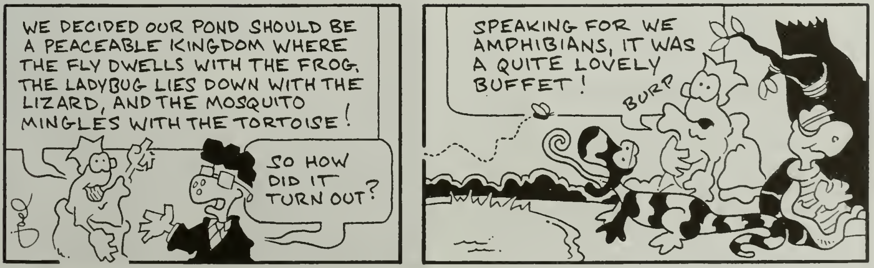
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Mennonite Church USA and Christians of other traditions should have:

- ○ More interaction (77%)
- ○ Less interaction (5%)
- ○ It depends on which traditions (16%)
- ○ Not sure (2%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


WE DECIDED OUR POND SHOULD BE A PEACEABLE KINGDOM WHERE THE FLY DWELLS WITH THE FROG, THE LADYBUG LIES DOWN WITH THE LIZARD, AND THE MOSQUITO MINGLES WITH THE TORTOISE!
SO HOW DID IT TURN OUT?
Joel
SPEAKING FOR WE AMPHIBIANS, IT WAS A QUITE LOVELY BUFFET!
BURP

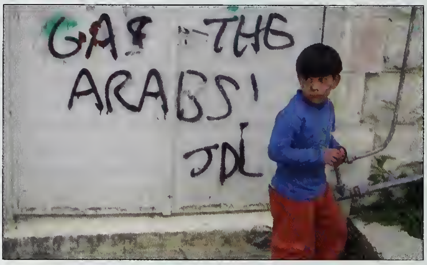
IN BRIEF

Bluffton, Hesston sign agreement

Bluffton (Ohio) University and Hesston (Kan.) College have signed a general education articulation agreement, which guarantees Bluffton's acceptance of any Hesston graduate who holds an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree and assures the smooth transfer of credits to Bluffton. —*Bluffton University and Hesston College*

10 stories you haven't read

The United Nations Department of Public Information has selected 10 stories from around the world in need of serious coverage: (1) Somalia: steps on a path to fragile peace in a shattered country; (2) tragic blind spot in health care for women; (3) Northern Uganda: a humanitarian crisis that demands sustained focus; (4) Sierra Leone: building on a hard-won peace; (5) actors for change: the growth of human-rights institutions; (6) Cameroon: farming in the dark; (7) island after the hurricane: Grenada struggles to recover from devastation; (8) behind closed doors: violence against women; (9) a viable alternative: curbing illicit drugs through development; (10) environment and health: new insights into spread of infectious diseases.—*Sojo Mail*



CPT

Settlers attack Palestinians, CPT workers

Racist settler graffiti appears near the home of Abu Heikel, a Palestinian resident of Tel Rumeida. A dozen settlers had attacked the home May 21 and moved closer as they stoned and broke windows in the room where the children were hiding. Israeli soldiers did nothing. Abu Haikel rushed to protect his children and was subsequently blindfolded and detained by soldiers while his children cried. The soldiers later released him. Settlers also stoned international observers, including members of Christian Peacemaker Teams, while they went to visit the Abu Haikel home.—*CPT*

Ministerial credentials suspended

PORTLAND, Ore.—Weldon Nisly, pastor at Seattle Mennonite Church, became the first Mennonite Church USA leader to have his or her ministerial credentials suspended for performing a same-sex wedding ceremony.

"After over a year of conversation and discernment," Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference leaders said in a May 31 release, "the Pastoral Leadership Committee of the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, and supported by the conference board, suspended for up to two years the ministerial credentials of Weldon Nisly for performing a same-sex ceremony in 2004. ... The conference accepts the membership guidelines of Mennonite Church USA and *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership*. PNMC asks its pastors and congregations to accept Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective."

This is the first time an area conference has suspended ministerial credentials in response to a pastor performing a same-sex ceremony. Western District Conference issued a letter of reprimand in 2000 to a retired pastor for his involvement in a same-sex ceremony.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Canadian registrants short of quorum

WINNIPEG—Registration numbers as of May 10 for the joint Mennonite Church USA-Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in July at Charlotte, N.C., were short of a quorum of delegates needed.

On May 10, only 284 adults were registered—196 of them as delegates. Bylaws state that 226 delegates are required to meet quorum. Since 2000, Canadian assemblies have averaged 582 total registrants (417 delegates).

The decision to meet jointly with Mennonite Church USA was part of an agreement made in 1999 at St. Louis at the last joint assembly of Canadian and U.S. delegates from General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Conference of Mennonites in Canada. At that meeting delegates agreed to separate into two national church bodies that would meet together every four years. The original plan was to host Mennonite Church USA in Canada in 2003.

Since the 1999 decision, new realities have reshaped the plans. For example, planners learned that Canadian meeting facilities capable of handling 10,000 Mennonites cost considerably more in July (Canada's high tourist season) than comparable meeting places in the American South for the same date—their low tourist season.

While there is a plan to adjust proceedings if quorum is not met, leaders remain hopeful another 30 delegates will register by the time the assembly starts on July 4.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Stoesz named MCC Central States director

NORTH NEWTON, Kan.—Mennonite Central Committee Central States has named John Stoesz of Philadelphia its executive director. In September he will replace interim director Vern Preheim.

Stoesz, a graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, has been executive director of the

Ryan Miller

Graduation joy in Lithuania

An exuberant senior celebrates her graduation from Lithuania Christian College April 30. The campus of this Christian liberal arts college, where six Mennonite Mission Network representatives provide a presence, is an oasis of hope for a region seeking to redefine itself after decades of Soviet occupation.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Jenna Stoltzfus

Cambodian youth reach out for peace

Some 1.7 million people in Cambodia perished during the reign of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979. Through Youth for Peace, a Mennonite Central Committee partner organization, students such as Theam Pisey (right) dream about peace and examine the society around them. Then they create and lead workshops in urban neighborhoods and rural villages on topics from conflict transformation to the dangers of drugs and HIV/AIDS.—*MCC News Service*

Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia, where he was active in its dismantling racism team and peacemaking committee.

Stoesz also spent 13 years as associate director of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches, where he planned and developed antipoverty and antihunger programs. He also worked with that organization's dismantling racism team.—*MCC U.S. News Service*

Sophomore class leaves first gift in 45 years

HESSTON, Kan.—The 189 graduating members of the Hesston College Class of 2005 gave a class gift to the college, the first such gift in 45 years.

Spearheading the effort were sophomores Kira Johnson, Denver; Marissa King, Sturgis, Mich., and Mandy Schwartzentruber, Goshen, Ind. They had numerous conversations about an outdoor sculpture with well-known artist John Mishler of Goshen, a 1968 graduate of Hesston. During Commencement Weekend May 6-8, the trio announced the sculpture, "Butterfly Daydream," which is to be eight to 10 feet tall.

Johnson described the purpose of the gift: "We want to thank those faculty and staff members who have touched our lives, and the Hesston community as a whole. Our hope is to give back to our campus and leave behind a lasting symbol of our appreciation and unity."—*Hesston College*

U.S. mayors adopt global warming protocol

SEATTLE—Unsettled by a series of dry winters in this normally wet city, Mayor Greg Nickels announced May 13 that he has formed a bipartisan coalition of mayors to adopt the Kyoto Protocol on global warming on the local level.

Nickels, a Democrat, says 131 other likeminded mayors have joined a bipartisan coalition to fight global warming on the local level, in an implicit rejection of the Bush administration's policy.

The mayors, representing nearly 29 million citizens in 35 states, are pledging to have their cities meet what would have been a binding requirement for the nation had the Bush administration not rejected the Kyoto Protocol: a reduction in heat-trapping gas emissions to levels 7 percent below those of 1990, by 2012.—*The New York Times*

African theology students seek new careers

KINSHASA, Democratic Republic of Congo—Careers in the church are the goal of Leya Muloba and Tatiana Ndjoko, two young Congolese Mennonite women studying theology. Neither plans to be a pastor.

"Now it is difficult [for women to be pastors], but maybe after another five years the church can change," Leya says. "Eventually it will happen."

Born and raised in Mennonite families in Kinshasa, Tatiana, 23, and Leya, 26, are students at the Centre Universitaire de Missiologie (University Missiological Centre or CUM). Both switched from business courses to studying theology.

Tatiana Ndjoko and Leya Muloba

Tatiana, the oldest of six siblings and a member of the Congolese Mennonite Brethren church, is drawn to mission work with a special interest in conflict resolution.

Leya, the second of eight children and a member of the Congo Mennonite Church, dropped out of business school because of lack of funds. A woman theologian in her local congregation gave her hope of scholarship support. Leya decided to continue and is now near the end of her third year at CUM. She hopes to receive her degree in two more years.—*Mennonite World Conference*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

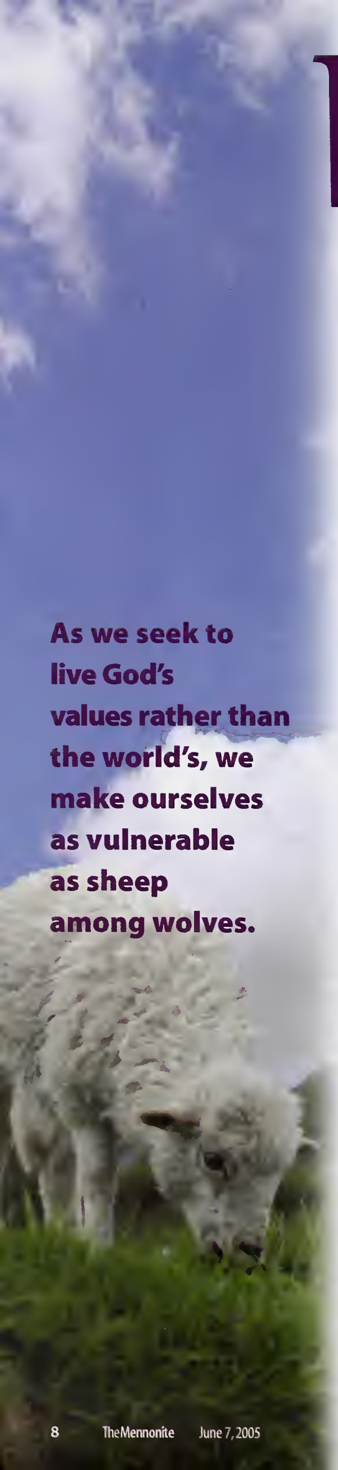
French receives global ministries internship

Karey French, junior global peace and justice studies major from Moundridge, Kan., has been named the first recipient of the Global Ministries Internship Endowment at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Family members of the late Waldo H. and Linda L. (Zielke) Friesen established the endowment in their memory in 2003. Cooperative with Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Church USA, its goal is to encourage young people to develop their commitment to the global peace and justice ministry of the Mennonite church. French left May 24 for two months in Kingston, Jamaica, where she will work with the Independent Jamaica Council for Human Rights, which is currently processing Haitian refugees seeking asylum in Jamaica.—*Bethel College*

Ask a toad

Percent of answers about billing provided by Medicare customer service representatives that were wrong: 96. Percent of wrong answers that a toad, through random leaps, provided to the same question: 50. Number of prisoners held by the U.S. military in Iraq in October 2004: 4,300. Number held in March 2005: 10,200. —*Yes!*

Wise as serpents,



by Julie P. Hart

See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.—Matthew 10:16

Our neighbor's phone call put us on alert for a pack of wild dogs that had attacked and killed six of the neighbor's sheep earlier. We were to call if we saw them. The neighbor said the dogs charge unexpectedly at innocent grazing sheep and cause instant mayhem. The sheep run away from their snarling attackers, while the dogs rip at the sheep's legs, hoping to bring one down. When one is down, the dogs go after the jugular vein, and the sheep slowly bleeds to death, helpless and immobile.

Jesus chose this scenario for preparing his disciples for ministry among their people. Sheep surrounded by wolves or wild dogs is an image of extreme vulnerability. Prior to Jesus' arrival in Palestine, Jews saw themselves as sheep and their enemies as wolves. Jesus broke with conventional wisdom by suggesting that wolflike attributes existed within as well as outside the Jewish community and that his followers were placing themselves at great risk going among them. With this ominous introduction, Jesus gave his followers authority to heal every disease and infirmity and to live and preach as he had preached. Their message to Israel was to repent, for God's intended kingdom of justice is near at hand.

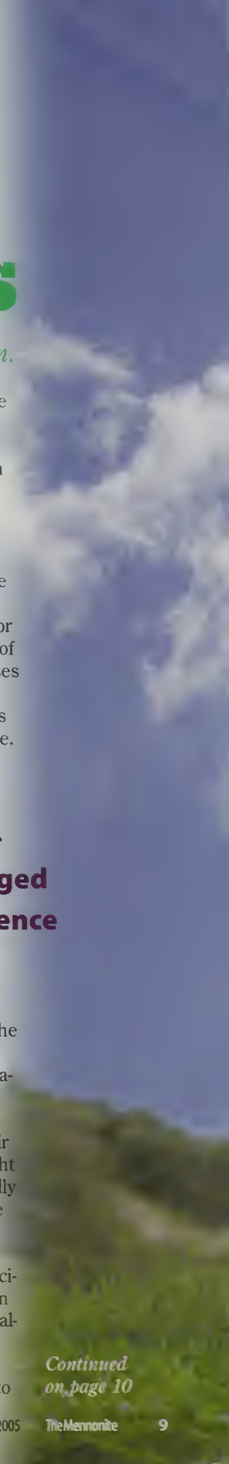
As Christians, we are called to carry Jesus' vision of a kingdom or society of peace with justice to the world. This kingdom, according to biblical scholars, is both present and future. The work of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and many other organizations arise from this call to live and proclaim God's kingdom.

CPT is a joint effort of the traditional peace churches to provide a violence-reduction force around the world in acute areas of conflict. Because of CPT's opposition to the demolition of Palestinian homes by the Israeli government, many Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers living there treat CPT as the enemy. Team members have been cursed, spit at, shoved, jailed and brutally beaten. While they also enjoy some immunity as North Americans, sometimes our work for justice makes us as vulnerable as sheep among wolves.

As we seek to live God's values rather than the world's, we make ourselves as vulnerable as sheep among wolves.

innocent as doves

For kingdom work, Jesus calls us to true wisdom, free of anger and depression.



Many can relate to such vulnerability in other settings: hospitals, schools, offices, social service agencies and even churches. As we seek to live God's values rather than the world's, we make ourselves as vulnerable as sheep among wolves. Jesus' advice—"Be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves"—is of interest not only to international peacemakers but to everyone. Kingdom work often creates enemies. Our message of peace with justice requires naming injustice. Theologian Walter Brueggemann warns, "A dominant culture, now and in every time, is grossly uncritical [of itself], cannot tolerate serious and fundamental criticism [of itself], and will go to great lengths to stop it."

What type of wisdom is like a serpent's? What is innocence like a dove's? And what does all of this mean for us as peacemakers and kingdom seekers today?

For Jewish society in the first century, four central concerns defined conventional wisdom: family, wealth, honor and religion. Of these, strict religious observance was most central. Wealth, family and honor were all understood as rewards that flowed from being religious. Many of Jesus' harshest words were directed at these expectations.

True wisdom: Jesus dismissed this conventional wisdom or set of expectations as the "broad way" and risked offending authorities by defining a "narrow way" of true wisdom. Instead he spoke of the wisdom of a serpent. Jesus' use of wisdom in this passage from Matthew is described as prudence or shrewdness depending on the biblical translation you use.

The dictionary defines shrewdness as a clever discerning awareness. As I imagine the serpent talking to Eve in the Garden of Eden, shrewd fits with a further description of artful or creative ways of dealing with situations. Serpents are astute in their perceptions of their environment. They know when to be still and when to dart. To be shrewd as a serpent is to see through and understand what is puzzling or hidden. One also might define shrewd as demonstrating diplomatic skill, just as the serpent did with Adam and Eve.

Prudence clarifies a further aspect of Jesus' true wisdom. To be prudent is to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason. Prudence involves skill and good judgment in the use of resources. The prudent exercise caution and circumspection as to possible danger or risk. They practice self-restraint, which also fits the serpent image.

The serpent in the garden, however, used its shrewdness for evil purposes. This is why Jesus juxtaposed the serpent image alongside the image of a dove's innocence.

Bible dictionaries describe innocence as "just or righteous." Innocence also encompasses a sense of being pure or unmixed, of one mind. Scripture uses innocence as free from sin or guilt, blameless, unacquainted with evil. Webster's Dictionary adds freedom from duplicity, deceit, malice or prejudice. Stiff criteria but essential to create balance with the wisdom and power available to the serpent. Innocence provides the moral and spiritual foundation the serpent lacks.

Just as Jesus challenged the conventional wisdom of first-century Jews, he also challenged their understanding of innocence and purity.

Just as Jesus challenged the conventional wisdom of first-century Jews, he also challenged their understanding of innocence and purity. For upright Jews in Jesus' time, purity was defined legalistically by adherence to the Ten Commandments and the ritual laws of the Torah. For the ancient Middle Eastern society, the dove was one of the only animals that did not produce bile, a bodily fluid associated with anger and melancholy. This combination of a hot temper and a depressed spirit was especially toxic and presented a stark contrast to the virtues Jesus deemed necessary for the mission work of sheep among wolves. It was not enough to

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

be astute, shrewd and prudent. For kingdom work, Jesus insisted that these qualities be combined with a pure spirit, free from anger and emotional pain.

Emotional pain: From our anger and pain we harm others and use our serpent power for selfish gain rather than kingdom goals. Psychologists affirm this connection between abusive behavior and emotional pain. While only about one-third of those abused as children become abusers, of those who do abuse, the majority have experienced unresolved emotional pain. Jesus' kingdom workers must be free of this toxic, emotional pain and anger, as free as a dove is of bile.

There are many examples of this marriage of shrewdness and innocence among CPT workers. One involves Cliff Kindy while walking night patrol in the streets of Hebron in the West Bank. CPT regularly patrols the streets as a peaceful presence to de-escalate clashes between Jewish settlers, Israeli soldiers and local Palestinian Muslims. This particular evening, Jewish settlers had congregated in the streets and were harassing a group of Palestinians. CPT workers stood by with cameras and notepads, attempting to discern appropriate action. Suddenly a settler shoved Cliff, well-known in his red CPT baseball cap, to the ground and cursed him in English.

Choosing to transcend the anger, Cliff gradually rose so as not to threaten his attacker. He extended his hand to the settler in sincere greeting. "Hello, my name is Cliff, I do not believe we have met."

The settler made it clear that Cliff was not welcome there and should go back to America and solve his own country's problems. Choosing to transcend the anger, Cliff gradually rose so as not to threaten his attacker. He extended his hand to the settler in sincere greeting. "Hello, my name is Cliff, I do not believe we have met." Catching the settler off guard, having not returned evil for evil, the response came with a moment's delay. "My name is Hate, and I hate you." Although the hater was unable to let go of his hate, the exchange diffused the clash and the crowd gradually dispersed to their homes without further incident.

Here is a contrasting example from the United States: Two years ago while in Washington with my public policy class from Bethel College, we visited a Christian nonprofit organization to discuss policy issues. The group wanted to dissuade a congressional committee chairman from supporting a bill funding birth control in Third World nations. In order to discourage his support of the bill, the organization had orchestrated a picket in front of the congressman's son's elementary school calling attention to the congressman's support of the bill. This picketing put acute pressure on the boy and his family, and the congressman cried foul. I asked about the organization's ethics behind this action. The spokesman's response was clear. "This is Washington," he said. "You've got to play hardball here or you lose." In my eyes, this group demonstrated shrewdness at the expense of innocence. Their tactic, designed to shame an innocent child in order to pressure his dad, was way off the mark.

Clear guidelines: If we wish to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves, we have at least three clear guidelines from Scripture. First, James 5:16 prods us to "confess [our] sins to one another … so that you may be healed." Sharing our shortcomings in a supportive environment offers the opportunity for healing our anger and pain, our guilt and fear, all emotions that may lead us toward harm rather than peacemaking.

Second, in James 1:5 we are encouraged to call upon the Lord for help in pursuing righteousness and wisdom. Does this not suggest that wisdom is given to those who ask for it in prayer?

Third, we learn in Philippians 4:8 (NIV) that "whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, … if anything is excellent or praiseworthy … [we must] think about such things." For me this means my work, relationships, TV watching, reading, academic pursuits and leisure must all focus on what is good. To dwell on good things—purity and wisdom—is to invite gradual transformation.

The world today cries out for peace with justice. As we hear and heed our call to challenge the world's values and herald God's kingdom, we may become as vulnerable as sheep among wolves. Jesus sets our path for this kingdom work, the narrow path. May we continue to confess our sins, pray and support efforts within our church and throughout our world that reflect the wisdom of serpents woven into the innocence of doves.

Julie Hart teaches at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church in Newton. She has served with CPT in the West Bank and in Colombia.

Roofing the new barn

by Ed Higgins

First, 1x4 purlins are laid down
nailed with 10d galvanized nails onto arching
2x6 rafters set 16 inches on center,
all skeletal mastodonic fir ribs.
Then the individual shingles loosed
from their tightly strapped bundles,
each the scent of incense holding
the memory of tall trees. Into lapped cedar scales
blind nailed with 10 inches exposure.

I will be at this roofing till mid-summer
like a penitent on hands and knees,
each nailed and set shingle a vigil for
later assurance against foul weather.

I move with steady progress
up the unfinished incline
into summer's blue cloudless sky.

Ed Higgins teaches creative writing and literature at
George Fox University, Newberg, Ore.

Renew your whole church, O Lord

by Albert J. Meyer

Are we Mennonites the only Christians in the world?

Of course not. Most of the songs we sing on Sunday mornings were written by Christians who were not Mennonites. Many of the devotional books we use were written by other Christians. Most Christians are not Mennonite.

Should we be in touch with some of these Christians who are not Mennonites?

Most of us already are. We're in touch with Christians of other traditions every day. We have friends, neighbors and co-workers who are non-Mennonite Christians. We join in community service projects, hear radio newscasts and TV preachers, read James Dobson and Rick Warren. Our boards and agencies are in touch with boards and agencies of other churches. Many of our congregations have had evangelistic meetings, Thanksgiving services and Good Friday observances with other churches in our communities.

Isn't spiritual fellowship enough? Do we need to have public relationships?

Jesus prayed that the followers that came after him "may all be one ... so that the world might believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21, 23). How will the world know and believe if our only relationships with other Christians are invisible or incidental relationships the world can't see?

Does this have to do with being missional, talking with other Christians, as well as with those who do not know the name of Christ?

Jesus' primary mission was to Jews who acknowledged the name of God. Anabaptists have been called the first missionaries of the modern era—but most of their contacts were with state-church people who called themselves Christian. If we want to be Christian and Anabaptist in our time, we should talk with Christians of other traditions about the Good News and what it is to be Christian and bring the Good News to those who have never heard the name of Jesus. We should be missional as Jesus and Menno were missional.

These are not easy questions. The church of Jesus Christ is horribly splintered. It isn't just a matter of saying everyone is OK. There were false shepherds in Jesus' time and in the time of our Anabaptist forebears, and are in our time. There may be ways we Mennonites are stumbling blocks to others and need counsel.

In this post-Constantinian era in which many think forcing people to be church members should be a thing of the past, we have unprecedented invitations to conversation and discernment.

But how do we know which relationships are helpful and which may lead us toward acculturation to the world around us? I have worked with the Mennonite Church USA Interchurch Relations groups on this question, and we have developed some provisional guidelines. Here are key points:

1. Our people need to hear preaching and teaching on John 17:20-23 as a foundation for discerning relationships with other Christians in our time.

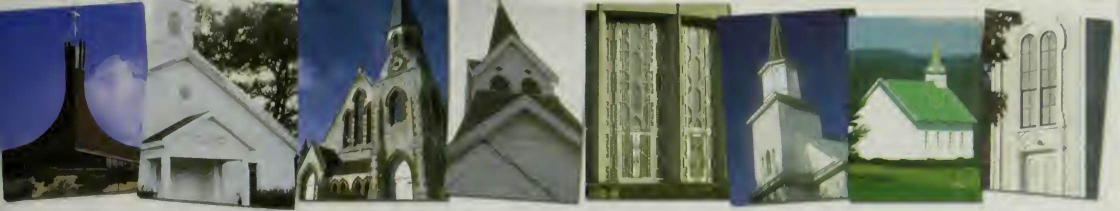
2. We should recognize the possibility of a variety of levels of relationships among Christians rather than simply the extremes "in fellowship" and "separated." The nature of our program collaboration with others who call themselves Mennonite or Christian in our various settings should depend on how much we share common ground in our understanding of the Christian gospel. A North American Mennonite congregation may, for example,

- work with others in its cluster or conference in evangelism and church planting;
- work with a wider circle, including Mennonites of other branches in Mennonite Central Committee in relief and development work;
- work with a still wider circle of non-Mennonite as well as Mennonite, Anabaptist churches in publishing a hymnal; and
- join with other Protestant and Catholic Christians in witness on certain societal issues and in actions as well as in words, as in Christian Peacemaker Teams.

3. As Mennonite Church USA, we should give some priority to conversation with those closest to us. Certainly we should relate to Mennonite Church Canada. We want to relate to other Mennonite branches and to other believers churches and the historic peace churches.

4. We should give priority to conversation with those most eager to converse with us on serious issues of faith and practice. We are in a "kairos" moment, unique in our 480-year history. At one time we were driven into the mountains and burned at the stake for our beliefs. Now, in this post-Constantinian era in which many think forcing people to be church members should be a thing of the past, we have unprecedented invitations to conversation and discernment.

5. We should not join a church council or associa-



Should Mennonite Church USA enter formal relationships with other Christian groups?

tion in which we cannot act with integrity. We should not join an association that issues statements or engages in acts we cannot affirm without indicating our opposition.

We should not join associations that demand we break relationships we feel called to maintain with other associations. Many American Protestant groups are polarized between Evangelicals and mainline Protestants. We want to help Christians talk with one another, not further the splintering of the church of Jesus Christ in our time.

6. We affirm the emergence of the new forum, Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A., which is bringing into conversation Evangelicals, Orthodox, Catholic and Pentecostal Christians, as well as mainline Protestants. Its stated goal is "to enable churches and national Christian organizations to grow closer in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world."

Mennonites identify with two of the five faith traditions participating: "Evangelical" and "Historic Protestant."

7. Mennonites who advocate discipleship should recognize the reality of unbelief and the error of seeking collaboration at the cost of truth yet also recognize that verbally professed doctrine is not the only or even the best way of determining Christian faithfulness. It is not only those who say "Lord, Lord" (Matthew 7:21; 25:31-46).

Whatever someone's Christian profession, we regard killing people as anomalous and an occasion for serious offense—we believe such beliefs and behaviors bring the name of Christ into disrepute. Others may regard some things we do as offensive. We recognize the possibility and reality of unbelief and sin and seek to discern God's truth in dialogue and openness to the Spirit's leading.

8. As a small minority community with a message, we Mennonites must discern our calling and mission in the various settings in which we find ourselves around the world. We are called both to plant new Mennonite churches and to engage in serious conversation with churches that call themselves Christian about the meaning of Christian faithfulness. We need to engage in serious discernment on the personnel and financial resources we devote to each of these efforts.

When more than 80 percent of the Hutus and Tutsis engaging in genocide in Rwanda call themselves Christian, starting new genocidal churches may need to be accompanied by an even greater effort to engage in serious conversations about what it is to be Christian.

In North America, most people who call themselves Christian still count as members babies and others who have made no Christian commitment and still practice the belief that there are times when Christians should kill each other and other people on the word of their governments.

9. There is a body of distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs for which some of our forebears have given their lives, for which some of our sisters and brothers are suffering today and for which we all are responsible to witness in our time. We should always be open to study and search with believers who differ in their understandings of the meaning of Christ's Lordship. Our faith can be enriched as we interact with Christians of other traditions. We want continually to test our understandings against all available information concerning the life and teachings of Jesus and the experience of God's people so that our beliefs and practices represent not private or extra-Christian understandings but faithful expressions of what it means to be Christian in today's world.

We need to keep our vision and calling clear. We are called to see beyond the welfare and witness of Mennonite Church USA. We are to further the faithfulness of the whole church of Jesus Christ and its witness in the world.

Renew your church, O Lord, and make us instruments of your peace.

Albert J. Meyer serves as volunteer staff member for Mennonite Church USA's Interchurch Relations Committee.

Whatever someone's Christian profession, we regard killing people as anomalous and an occasion for serious offense — we believe such beliefs and behaviors bring the name of Christ into disrepute.

Harold S. Bender, a Mennonite leader in the past century, studied at Princeton and was influenced by his Presbyterian teachers there. Then he studied with state church professors at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. After he returned to the States to teach and serve as dean at Goshen College and Goshen College Biblical Seminary, he was elected president of the (non-Mennonite) professional society of American church historians. It was out of his encounters with other Christians and his reflection on what Mennonites have to say to the surrounding world that Harold Bender wrote his presidential address to the American Society of Church History, "The Anabaptist Vision"—a work that, for Mennonites, became one of the key identity-forming writings of the century.—Albert J. Meyer

Baptism *as necessity*

by Marlin Birkey

Mennonites are not sacramentalists. Our Anabaptist forebears, along with the mainstream of what became known as Protestantism, rejected the Catholic notion that an external act alone can create an internal spiritual reality. Thus baptism and our celebration of the Lord's Supper have taken on strictly symbolic significance. They are outward visible symbols of already established internal spiritual realities.

Mennonites are hard pressed to posit the necessity rather than the desirability of baptism. If baptism is only an outward symbol of the already finished and complete internal work of salvation, then there is no theological basis for pressing the necessity of baptism. If one can be truly saved without it, then baptism is little more than window dressing for the internal reality of salvation—nice but not necessary.

If one can be truly saved without it, then baptism is little more than window dressing for the internal reality of salvation—nice but not necessary.

The symbolic view of baptism is more or less demanded by our theology of salvation, a theology we have essentially drawn in the contemporary Mennonite church from Protestantism.

Along with mainstream Protestants, we affirm that individuals are saved by grace through faith. A person repents, intellectually determines to turn from self as Lord to embrace Jesus as Lord and believes, intellectually agrees, that Jesus is the one and only Son of God and sacrifice for sin and correspondingly surrenders life into God's care and control. Sins are thus forgiven and salvation imparted. Because salvation is by grace alone, nothing external can add to it or subtract from it. The most we can say about the external act of baptism is that it witnesses to an already complete regeneration. It cannot be construed as a part of what it means to receive salvation and therefore cannot be conceived of as a necessity.

Salvation as part of the community of faith

The descent of the Spirit: This conception of baptism wilts in the face of the overwhelming witness of the New Testament concerning baptism. In Matthew's record, Jesus was himself baptized and viewed his baptism as fitting, in some way, for the requirements of righteousness. It was in connection with his baptism that the Holy Spirit descended upon him. In Jesus' Great Commission, the disciples were instructed to baptize as part of the disciple-making process. In the vast majority of references to salvation events in the book of Acts, those being saved were immediately baptized. In many of those cases, baptism is linked to the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the converts. In most cases, baptism precedes the descent of the Spirit. Many references in the Epistles clearly assume that baptism has taken place.

The weight of this New Testament witness pulls us in the direction of construing baptism as something much more integrally related to the salvation event than our Mennonite theology of baptism as symbol allows. Yet at this point we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place—trapped between our theology of salvation as an individual act of repentance and faith alone and the weight of this New Testament witness to baptism being integral to the salvation event.

While pondering this dilemma, I came across an article by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, "Embarrassed by God's Presence" (*The Christian Century*, Jan. 30, 1985). They write: "Indeed, we have rejected the assumption, ingrained for so long in theology, that salvation lies in a renewed sense of self-understanding. Salvation is the tough social formation of a colony, a holy nation, a people, a family, a congregation that is able to stand against the pretensions and the illusions of the world."

This dilemma over baptism might be resolved, even if tenuously, by a different conception of salvation, one that is less enslaved to the Protestant formulation and more faithful to our Anabaptist understanding of God's activity in the world. The Protestant formulation may be described again as the view that God's activity in the world is best understood as saving individuals. Those individuals are automatically included in the universal Body of Christ and are strongly encouraged, if they believe it to be in their best interests, to join a local congregation. Because salvation is an individual, internal and already completed reality and because heaven is already guaranteed for those who are in this way saved, congregational involvement, like baptism, is nice and encouraged but can hardly be theologically argued as necessary for salvation.

The community of faith: Anabaptist Mennonites believe God's activity in the world can be more accurately described as the formation of a community of faith, the universality of which is given concrete expression in local congregations. This community, formed and always being formed by God, is the arena of God's saving activity. It is not that individuals are saved and then added to the community; rather they are saved by being brought into the community. Salvation is through inclusion in that arena—the community of faith—where God's saving activity is being carried out. This conception is faithful to the entire biblical witness to God's activity—the formation and calling forth of a people; first the nation of Israel, and then through the sacrifice of Christ the bringing together of Jew and Gentile in the church.

It is not that individuals are saved and then added to the community; rather they are saved by being brought into the community.

Baptism is not, then, merely a subsequent visible witness to an already completed internal reality. Rather it is the rite of initiation into salvation. In accordance with the Anabaptist rejection of baptism as sacrament, if the baptism is not linked with the cognitive and volitional work of repentance and faith, it is only another way to get wet, spiritually insignificant. But coupled with repentance and belief, it is the door into the church, the saved people of God. As the apostle Peter declared to a stricken crowd on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In other words, through repentance and baptism, you will be ushered into that realm where the presence and power of God resides and operates through the Holy Spirit.

Marlin Birkey is pastor of Ashton Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.

Mennonite Church U
and seminaries grad

Bluffton College News Service

Bluffton University's Aaron Williams flashes a thumbs-up after receiving his diploma. Williams was instrumental in developing Bluffton's student Damascus Road anti-racism team, the first one of its kind.

Over the past six weeks, seven universities, colleges and seminaries that relate to Mennonite Church USA conducted commencement exercises, held baccalaureate services and sponsored alumni reunions to celebrate a record crop of graduates. Among the 1,238 individual stories that could be told are several that have received special attention from their schools. One woman at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary graduated with her husband and sister in the same class. Three students at Eastern Mennonite University graduated with three degrees—and academic honors. More than a third of Goshen College's graduating class signed a pledge to take into account the social and environmental consequences of jobs they might get in the future. The choices for this year's commencement speakers may be pointing to a trend: five of the seven speakers teach in one of the schools or a related institution. Here is an excerpt from each school's release.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
May 20; 37 graduates

AMBS is located in Elkhart, Ind., and relates to both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. This year more than one-third of AMBS's graduating group came from Canada. Melanie Neufeld of Winnipeg, shared commencement with her husband, Jonathan, and her sister, Julie Rempel, also of Winnipeg. The commencement service was held at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. Commencement speaker Yvonne Delk, who teaches in Chicago's Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE), was the first African-American woman to be ordained in the United Church of Christ. Twenty-four graduates received the master of divinity degree, two received a master of arts: peace studies, four the master of arts: theological studies, four the master of arts in Christian formation, one the master of arts in mission and evangelism, and two the certificate in theological studies.

Bethel College
May 22; 106 graduates

By the randomness of alphabetical order, Greta Steingard, Henderson, Neb., was the 300th student to earn a degree in social work from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., since the program was accredited in 1974. Steingard was one of nine social work majors who walked across the Memorial Hall stage on May 22. One of her two major professors, Ada Schmidt-Tieszen, was in the first class of social workers to graduate from Bethel in 1974. In addition to Steingard, 105 students received a bachelor of arts (43) or a bachelor of science (65) degree on May 22 (two graduated in abstentia). According to John Sheriff, vice president for academic affairs, the class of 2005 comprised 44 men and 64 women from 13 states and three foreign countries (Canada, Peru and Russia). Seventy-two graduates were from Kansas, with three or more graduates each from Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Minnesota.

Bluffton University
May 7-8; 272 graduates

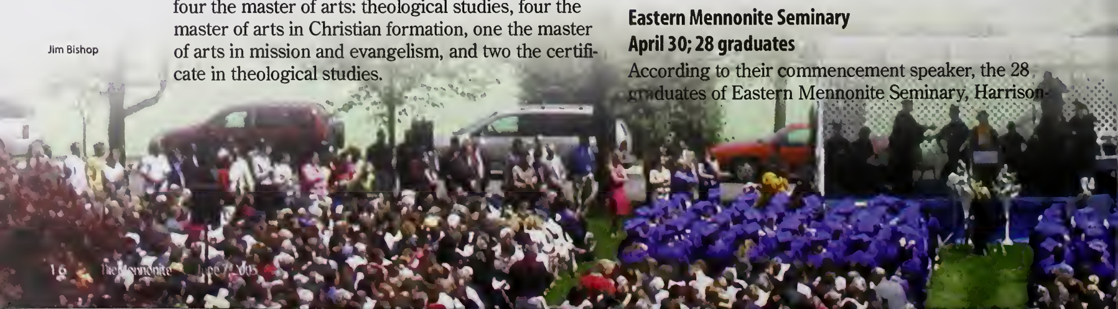
Beautiful spring weather welcomed the first graduating class of Bluffton (Ohio) University which concluded the academic year with the 105th annual commencement as well as the 95-year-old tradition of dancing around the May Pole. A record-breaking 272 students were the first to graduate since the name change to Bluffton University in August 2004. Twenty-four of the students received master's degrees in education or organizational management.

Owen Gingerich, senior astronomer emeritus of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory and research professor of astronomy and of the history of science at Harvard University, was the commencement speaker. Three retiring faculty members were honored for a total of 79 years of service to Bluffton: Don Schweingruber, vice president and dean of students; Betty Sommer, associate professor of social work; and Bob Suter, professor of chemistry.

Eastern Mennonite Seminary
April 30; 28 graduates

According to their commencement speaker, the 28 graduates of Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrison-

Jim Bishop



SA universities, colleges
uate 1,235

burg, Va., face a paradox: They will be in positions of power and authority, but their strength will emerge amid their "weaknesses and vulnerabilities."

At EMS' 56th annual commencement J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., told the graduating class that "power isn't something we have a right to but is entrusted to us by God. It can easily be usurped." EMS's graduating class included 17 members of Mennonite Church USA, four from the United Methodist Church and several from other denominations and nondenominational groups.

Eastern Mennonite University
May 1; 380 graduates

Rainy weather gave way to mostly sunny skies, allowing Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., to hold its 87th commencement exercises on the front lawn of the campus (see photo below). The EMU class of 2005 totalled 380, including 317 undergraduates, 60 awarded master's degrees in conflict transformation, counseling, education and business administration, and three graduate certificate recipients.

Commencement speaker John L. McCullough, president and CEO of Church World Service, the oldest and largest ecumenical humanitarian organization in the world, used Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" as a springboard for his address on choosing life's direction. "The road taken is a statement about values and traditions," McCullough said. The undergraduate class included three students who each received degrees in three majors, an unusual achievement: Jason D. Garber, Hutchinson, Kan.; Rachel E. Medley, Harrisonburg; and Davi R. Soesilo, Indonesia. All three earned academic honors.

Goshen College
April 24; 223 graduates

As they leave their college years behind, said Goshen (Ind.) College commencement speaker and conference minister for Western District Conference Dorothy Nickel Friesen, members of the class of 2005 need to consider what kind of "traveling shoes" they will wear and where their feet will take them. They should be prepared to make a difference in the world, Nickel Friesen said, having entered a Christ-centered college of passionate learning, global citizenship, compassionate peacemaking and servant leadership and emerging transformed. During the ceremony, 223 degrees were conferred, including 106 graduates from Indiana, 29 international students and 36 graduates in the adult programs and Florida extensions.

The 2005 graduating class represents 24 different states and 15 countries. Thirty-seven percent of traditional graduates have signed a graduation pledge that reads: "I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organization for which I work."

The Class of 2005 has 33 more graduates than last year's; Bluffton's class is the largest ever at 272; Hesston's 46 nursing program graduates are the most ever.

Hesston College
May 8; 189 graduates

"Our nation is full of greed, arrogance and violence," June Alliman Yoder told Hesston (Kan.) College's 2005 graduates. "Bullies are not just part of the elementary school scene, but they are also part of adult society and in our homes, too. You find them among those who have power of any kind, and when we are educated, we have power. But Jesus offers another way." Yoder, professor of communication and preaching at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., used the Mark 10 story about James and John—wanting high-ranking positions—to say, "Across America, lots of graduates are on the wide road that leads to wealth, status, promotion and ambition."

Hesston's 2005 graduating class included 46 graduates in the nursing program, the largest class in the history of the Hesston College nursing program. The nursing program began in 1966, with diplomas first awarded in 1968.

Lesther Caceros, Dallas, received his degree from Goshen (Ind.) College interim president John Yordy (left).

Miriam Loh/Goshen College Public Relations

Searching for a third way

Truman H. Brunk is a member of Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

We are a historic peace church, but it seems my church is only slightly better than secular society in attempts at peace work.

We live in a time of violence and often find ourselves caught in its destructive web. When we "take off the gloves" or "send in the troops" we are meeting violence with violence, generating more of the same. When we acquiesce to small doses of violence, we become desensitized and embrace the popular insanity that violence is normal. We passively give over to its dominance.

I have seen brothers and sisters disagree violently and part ways without finding constructive ways through their problems. This is tragic.

Many of our assaults have been in the name of God—upholding our faith, standing firm on beliefs, following the rules of our faith, being morally upright. In *Exclusion and Embrace*, Miroslav Volf writes: "Obsession with rules—not bad rules but salutary rules—encourages self-righteousness and the demonization of others. … In situations of conflict, Christians often find themselves accomplices in war rather than agents of peace."

All my life as a Mennonite Anabaptist I have heard about a third way without finding it. Our focus has been the missional church (across the street and around the world). This is needed, but maybe it is time to focus on our souls. Do we need to learn what it means to live in peace and goodwill? How to forgive and be forgiven? How to wait before the Lord and practice God's presence?

My father was a gifted mediator and used widely by the church in resolving conflict. During my teen years, I remember him coming home disappointed from meetings that had ended with winners and losers. He sought a third way where everyone was heard, respected, honored and appreciated.

Here are some simple steps to a third way:

1. Take time. Our culture values speed. Parker Palmer talks about the "blizzard of the world." We must invest time if we hope to build the Christian disciplines of silence and solitude, prayer and meditation, listening and reflection, serving one another, washing feet. In *When the Heart Waits*, Sue Monk Kidd writes: "When you're waiting, you're not doing nothing. You're doing the most important something there is. You're allowing your soul to grow up. If you can't be still and wait, you can't become what God created you to be."

2. Ask questions. Can we engage in ways that honor the soul and show respect for the brother or sister? In *The Message*, Eugene Petersen translates Romans 12:10, "Be good friends who love deeply." John Woolman (1720-1772) a Quaker, for three decades went among his people asking, "Is slavery a heritage we want to pass on to our children and their children?" Is it any wonder that Quakers were the first to renounce slavery as evil?

3. Listen to stories. Every day, millions of people go to professional counselors for help. Basically they go to tell their stories. A story provides an account of where we are coming from, how we arrived at a conviction and how we were transformed. Stories prompt others to also disclose where they are coming from and how they have formed a conviction and been transformed. Out of these personal stories can grow a bond of respect, honor and appreciation. In a time that tempts us to rigidity and rejection, we must find the way to mutual respect. We must learn to listen to stories instead of demonizing the storyteller. Stories are a way of discovering common ground we never knew we had. Storytelling is a low-risk way to stand together on holy ground.

4. Listen deeply. Why can't we learn the art of listening to one another? We need to honor one another in the family of faith. I need to listen to those around me, cultivating grace and goodwill. I also need to speak the truth of my soul and believe I will be heard. This kind of listening calls for silence and respect instead of drowning out the other's voice in my rush to respond. When I listen to others I may have my heart broken open and transformed. By listening deeply I will learn that truth resides in more than my heart. Truth is often found between us and in the community of faith.

5. Forgive. About 50 years ago a miracle happened in Africa. Instead of demonizing one another, missionaries decided to "meet at the cross" and embrace. Miroslav Volf writes: "The only way to peace is through embrace—that is, after the parties have forgiven and repented, for without forgiveness and repentance, embrace is a masquerade." The Bible insists that sin is the exclusion of the other from my heart and from my world. Can we, like those missionaries, embrace at the cross?

I like Peterson's paraphrase of James 1 in *The Message*: "Dear Friends, Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue, and let anger straggle along in the rear." TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Light in the darkness**—Janae Yoder
- **The church and mental illness**—Becky Oberg

What did your church do with the $12?

Each Mennonite Church USA congregation received 'seed money' in 2004.

One wouldn't ordinarily associate Christmas stockings with the story of Jesus multiplying loaves and fishes. But the youth group at Grace Mennonite Church in Pandora, Ohio, made the connection when multiplying seed money Mennonite Church USA sent to their congregation in 2004. They linked the two ideas by multiplying the $12 called "Loaves and Fishes."

Dave Maurer, youth pastor, bought $1 stockings with the money at a Dollar General store. During their annual Christmas party, youth paired into eight teams to decorate and hang them on a fireplace in the foyer of the church. For three Sundays the youth group invited people to vote on their favorite stocking by placing money in its toe. The winning stocking, created by Juli Suter and Zach Dey, raised $73. That amount, with the earnings of the other seven stockings, totaled $357.

The youth then donated the funds to Adriel, Inc., a Mennonite Health Service Alliance organization that provides residential and foster-care services to youth in West Liberty, Ohio. In a step beyond the financial gift, the youth group also went on a service trip on May 13-14 to Adriel to interact with kids living in group homes.

"This provided a more tangible and real way for youth to understand what being missional means," Maurer says. "So often projects are distant from them, such as when they gave money to help people with AIDS in other parts of the world, when Adriel is only miles away. The direct action helped them make this mission their own."

Developing new ways for making God's mission their own was why Executive Leadership sent a $12 check to the some 940 Mennonite Church USA congregations, says Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA. The money came from an offering received at the concluding adult-youth worship service at Atlanta 2003 to invite people to invest in God's kingdom in their own setting.

Lana Miller, associate director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, birthed the loaves and fishes idea. Though a similar offering won't be taken at Charlotte 2005, youth and adults will have opportunities to give offerings for church plantings in North Carolina and for Mennonite Mission Network's ministries in China.

"We've always taken offerings designated for specific national and international projects," she says. "At Atlanta, we gave it a different twist by challenging individuals and congregations to hear how God was calling them personally."

Courtesy photo

Juli Suter and Zach Dey hold the winning stocking that was part of their congregation's plan to turn $12 into $357.

Tabor Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., discovered how their humble gift of bongo drums—purchased with their seed money and other donations—could reverberate in holy ways with their sister congregation, Potter House Mennonite Church, a recent church planting in Houston. In a visiting exchange, Potter House came to Tabor in fall 2004, when one of its members said he liked the bongo drums that Tabor's worship team used. When 17 people from Tabor traveled to Houston in April, they took the gift of bongo drums.

"When we presented the bongos to Potter House, Aurora and her daughter, Claudia, started to cry," says Corey Miller, pastor at Tabor. "The whole Parchmont family is on the worship team, but there is one brother who is estranged from the family, and the church and lives in Brownsville, Texas. Claudia told us that he plays bongo drums and that she felt the gift was a sign from God that he would come home and back to the church." *—Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Attention pastors

Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* July 26 Charlotte 2005 issue

Everyone in your congregation can read about Charlotte 2005 and what happened there even if they don't already receive *The Mennonite*. We are printing extra copies of this special edition so that all can have the opportunity to become more informed.

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 before June 30 to place your order for extra copies. Your order will be sent in bulk at $2.00 per copy ($3.00 Cdn.). Payment must be received by July 4. No invoice will be issued at this low cost.

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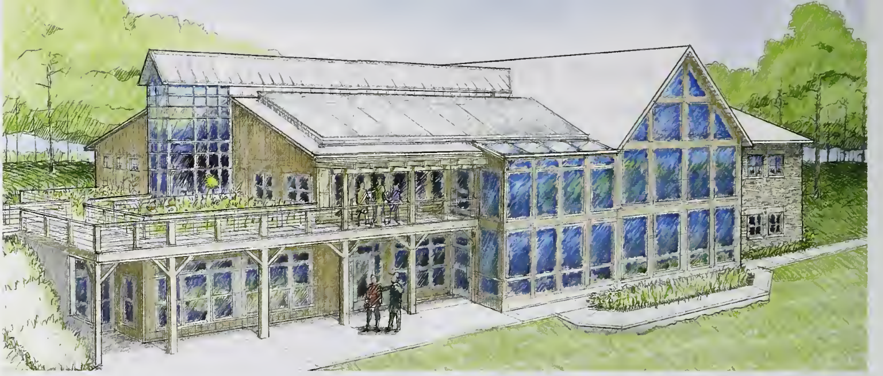

Goshen College plants 'green' building

New environmental center will be first 'platinum'-level building in Indiana.

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, which is Goshen (Ind.) College's 1,150-acre environmental education facility, launched phase one of its "green" collegiate facility on May 4. Luke Gascho, Merry Lea's executive director, encouraged guests to view the beginning of the project not as a groundbreaking, but the beginning of ground healing.

We hope that our project will help heal and renew the earth.
—Luke Gascho

"The word 'groundbreaking' suggests that human development must break the ground," said Luke Gascho, Merry Lea's executive director, "but we hope that our project will help heal and renew the earth."

Rieth Village is the $2 million initial phase of the project and consists of two cottages that will provide housing for up to 32 students and a third structure that will serve as the initial classroom and office building. The structures will be ready to welcome students in the spring of 2006. Lee and Mary Jane Rieth founded Merry Lea, and Rieth Village is named for them.

Gascho described the emphasis that facility designers placed on the use of water in Rieth Village. The complex is designed to retain all storm water on site and permit it to soak back into the soil. Wastewater will be treated on site in specially designed wetlands. Rainwater stored in cisterns will be used to flush toilets.

Contractors will find this project to be different; the design incorporates the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system. LEED provides rigorous guidelines in areas such as energy and atmosphere, water efficiency, use of environmentally friendly materials and indoor air quality.

The project is registered at the platinum level—the highest level of any registered project in Indiana. LEED guidelines, for example, specify that when the project's contractor, Hamilton Hunter Builders of Fort Wayne, Ind., begin the construction process, they are limited in the weight of the equipment they can use to avoid compacting the soil. Contractors must also reseed any topsoil left exposed longer than two weeks with a cover crop to prevent erosion.

After the building is constructed, the surrounding site—which had been an eroded farm field overgrown with invasive species such as autumn olive—will be seeded with native plants.

Special features of the infrastructure will include a 10-kilowatt wind generator, a wastewater treatment system, solar water heaters and an integrated system for storm water management.

The design team has also developed plans for a second phase that includes a 20,000-square-foot academic building and four more cottages.

Construction of phase two will begin in three to five years after an additional $6.5 million in capital funds are raised.—*Larry Yoder of Goshen College news service*

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A stronger voice for African leaders

Mission agencies transfer decision-making powers to partnership councils.

Mennonite church leaders from Africa and mission workers from three North America agencies put new administrative structures to the test in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Burkina Faso last month.

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (AIMM), Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness have engaged in a restructuring process that attempts to more adequately reflect current reality in the global Mennonite church by transferring decision-making power to African church leaders through Partnership Councils.

"It is right that African church leaders engage with a stronger voice in the decision-making about mission vision, personnel and priorities that impact the churches they have been called to lead," said Rod Hollinger-Janzen, executive coordinator for Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

National Partnership Councils meet twice each year in addition to the annual International Central Council that brings together the Partnership Councils of Botswana, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa.

These four nations represent the countries in which AIMM personnel have served for all or part of the 91 years of this agency's existence and where AIMM programs continue today.

The Congolese Partnership Council met March 31-April 1 in Kinshasa, Congo, where three national Mennonite denominations are working together to present a united witness in a country devastated by armed conflict and personal greed of foreign and national leaders.

Adolphe Komuesa, president of the Communauté Mennonite au Congo (Mennonite Church of Congo), emphasized the gifts that each denomination brings to their collaborative efforts to send missionaries to other areas of this vast country and to provide education, leadership training and health care in the areas where one-fourth of the world's Mennonites live.

"Each gift is for the building up of the church," Komuesa said. "We have different competencies. Mennonite churches … shouldn't live separately."

Hollinger-Janzen, Steve Wiebe-Johnson, Mennonite Mission Network's director for Africa, and Peter Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada Witness' facilitator of mission partnerships for Africa and Europe, represented their agencies at the Kinshasa meeting and at the Partnership Council April 18-19 in Orodara, Burkina Faso.

Siaka Traore, president of both the Burkinabé Partnership Council and of the Mennonite church in Burkina Faso, echoed the priorities stated by Komuesa.

Rod Hollinger-Janzen

Pastors Mapamboro and Komuesa of the Mennonite Church of Congo assist Mennonite Mission Network's Steve Wiebe-Johnson (right) in cutting the ribbon during the dedication ceremony of new offices at the Christian University of Kinshasa.

Traore also shared a vision for a peace education center.

"I've seen the evils of war in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Let's work so that this does not happen in Burkina Faso," Traore said.

The International Central Council is scheduled for Nov. 14-15.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Meet AAI team member
Jerry S. Kennell, AAI principal

More than 30 years experience working with nonprofit organizations in fundraising, strategic planning and board development; master's degree in pubic administration, New York University; extensive capital campaign experience; at home in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Other AAI team members: Rich Gerig, Dan Hess, Pat Swartzendruber, Mike Wiese and Becky Drumm.

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Search committees look for presidents

MMA, Bethel College, Bluffton University, Goshen College need new leaders.

Four institutions that relate directly to Mennonite Church USA are searching for new leadership. MMA, which started its search process to replace current president Howard Brenneman in May 2004, may be ready to name its new president this summer.

"We anticipate an announcement by August," says MMA board chair Carol Suter. "We are working with a short list of about six people."

According to Suter, MMA's Succession Planning Committee has talked with 200 people who are either candidates or serve as references for candidates. Suter also said that not all candidates currently under consideration are from MMA's constituency groups.

"We hired an outside search firm," Suter says. "It's helped us get Mennonite and Anabaptist candidates we wouldn't have otherwise, as well as a few outside candidates."

Among the three Mennonite Church USA colleges looking for new presidents, Goshen (Ind.) College is the farthest along. According to Rick Stiffney, vice president of the college's board of overseers and chair of the search committee, that process is in "the quiet phase."

"If we say we have a short list," Stiffney says, "it sounds like the process is a little farther along than it is. We did a very aggressive listening process in January and February with 25 listening sessions. That elongated the process, but it was time very well spent."

Stiffney says the Goshen College search committee expects to move to the public phase in the next few months and "when we enter the public phase it will be with our candidate of choice."

Shirley Hershey Showalter resigned as Goshen College president last September. John Yordy is serving as interim president.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Bluffton (Ohio) University are just beginning their search processes, having recently named the chairs and members of their search committees.

Bethel College's search committee is made up of representatives from the board, faculty and administration and Mennonite Education Agency (MEA). Danielle Goering, Phoenix and Moundridge, Kan., was appointed in March to chair the committee. Other Bethel board representatives are Walter Dyck, Temple, Texas; Melvin Goering, Santa Fe, N.M.; Ray Penner, Newton, Kan.; and James Voth, Newton. Faculty representatives are Ami Regier, associate professor of English, and Richard Zerger, professor of chemistry. Representing the administrative cabinet is Sondra Koontz, vice president for advancement. Serving in ex officio roles are MEA board representative Ed Diller, Fort Thomas, Ky., and Bethel board chair Greg Gaeddert, Leawood, Kan. E. LaVerne Epp announced in March his plans to step down. John Sheriff, vice president for academic affairs and academic dean, begins as interim president Nov. 15.

Bluffton University's president, Lee Snyder, will retire in June 2006. Bluffton's search committee will be led by David Baumgartner, a board of trustees member from Berne, Ind. Other members appointed to the committee include Andrew Bixel, student senate president 2005-06, Bluffton, Ohio; Don Schweingruber, administrative staff, Bluffton; Edie Landis, board of trustee member from Eastern District Conference, Telford, Pa.; Franzie Loepp, MEA board member, Normal, Ill.; George Metz, faculty member, Bluffton; Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Goshen, Ind.; Lavonne Hartman, board of trustee member from Ohio Mennonite Conference, Elida, Ohio; Mark Suderman, faculty member, Bluffton; Ron Lora, board of trustee member, Bluffton; Ruth Naylor, Bluffton Village community member, and Morris Stutzman, ex officio, board of trustees chair, Wooster, Ohio.—*Everett J. Thomas with releases from Bethel College and Bluffton University*

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Courtesy photo

MEEC draws 500 to choir festival

Middle school students from 16 Mennonite schools practice for their public performance at the annual Mennonite Elementary Education Council choir festival held at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School on May 6. The concert, about 500 voices strong, was directed by Dwight Thomas, church musician, composer-arranger and former teacher at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa. The students were accompanied by Cheryl Eshleman, rehearsal accompanist for the Franconia-Lancaster Choral Singers.—*Fern Clemmer of Lancaster Mennonite Schools*

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In the FOOTSTEPS of the APOSTLE PAUL (November 6-22)

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EXPERIENCING JAMAICA, its CULTURE and PEOPLE (January 13-20)
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AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (Feb. 3-23)
VIETNAM (February 8-25)
MEXICO (March 10-18)
PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA and PERU (March 21 - April 6)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-19)
WEST PRUSSIAN MENNONITE HERITAGE (June 25 - July 5)
ENGLAND and SCOTLAND (June 28 - July 10)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 5-20)
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CALENDAR

***Annual convention*: Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association** convention will be held at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, June 23-26. For a weekend of worship, fellowship and relaxation in the beautiful Laurel mountains of Pennsylvania, contact the MMA office at 183 Grandview Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or www.mennmed.org.

WORKERS

Smoker, Art, ended May 1 as pastor at North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Anderson, Scarlett Olivia, April 22, to Winston and Miriam Blosser Anderson, Arnold, Mo.

Beachy, Taylor Karina, March 4, to Verlyn and Treva Lapp Beachy, Mifflinburg, Pa.

Birky, Kyla Jenae, May 8, to Jesse and Erin Clark Birky, Hopedale, Ill.

Chisolm, Noah Jayson, May 4, to Jayson and Theresa Ladnier Chisolm, Meridian, Miss.

Copeland, Jackson Ross, April 27, to James and Chandra Reimer Copeland, Newton, Kan.

Endorf, Luke Martin, April 7, to Joel and Sarah Zimmerman Endorf, Anna, Ohio.

Epp, Mekenna Hope, March 27, to Jerod and Kim Albert Epp, Henderson, Neb.

Farrough, Catherine Ann, April 23, to Peter and Amal Friesen Farrough, South Bend, Ind.

Hall, Javen Michael, May 6, to Mike and Cindy Kurtz Hall, Hartville, Ohio.

Hartzler, Benjamin James, March 23, to Greg and Laura Mackey Hartzler, Bluffton, Ohio.

Jantzen, Alexis McKenna, April 29, to Keith and Sonia Gunther Jantzen, Kearney, Neb.

King, Allison Elizabeth, May 11, to Brent and Stephanie King, Wauseon, Ohio.

Krahn, Ian Haines, March 1, to Brian and Stacy Haines Krahn, Mishawaka, Ind.

Leaman, Denver Dale, April 9, to Justin Dale and Dawn Denlinger Leaman, Lancaster, Pa.

Leaman, Josiah Marc, March 21, to Joel M. and Shelley Wissler Leaman, Lancaster, Pa.

Mierau, Owen Tyler, March 21, to Jeb and Nicole Shirley Mierau, Lincoln, Neb.

Murray, Gordon Brunner, May 3, to Peter and Marta Brunner, Chicago, Ill.

Parmelee, Jake Tee, May 5, to Timothy and Amy Parmelee, Bath, N.Y.

Pickard, Camron Jon, May 5, to Jeremy and Renea Hershberger Pickard, Kalona, Iowa.

Plummer, Tristan Jay, April 30, to Nicholas Plummer and Jennifer Peifer, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Stringer, Daniella Grace, April 13, to Neville and Lori Gannon Stringer, Exton, Pa.

Stutzman, Dawson Carter, March 3, to Stacy and Julie Gerber Stutzman, Sarasota, Fla.

Stutzman, Jackson Wyatt, April 20, to Kelly and Stephanie Kelly Stutzman, Sarasota, Fla.

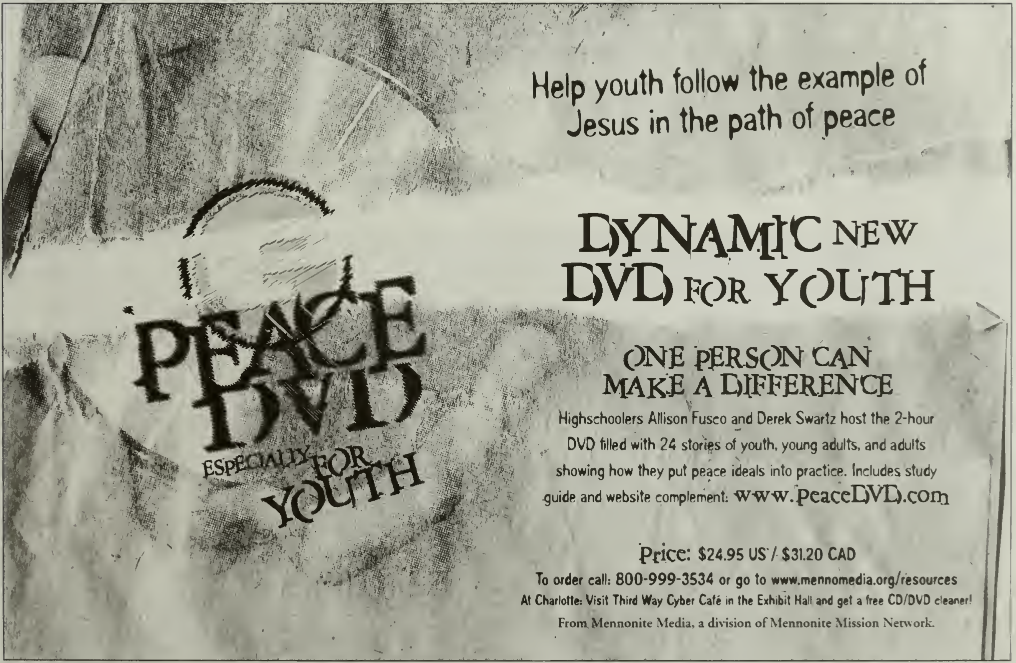
Swartley, Caden Travis, April 30, to Eric and Erin Travis Swartley, Harrisonburg, Va.

Szabo, Stephen Jacoby, Feb. 11, to John and Katie Jacoby Szabo, Columbus, Ohio.

Trost, Grace Jean, April 24, to Benjamin and Lori Armentrout Trost, Mt. Crawford, Va.

Wenger, Kelsey Lynne, March 24, to Lowell and Aimee Estes Wenger, Roaring Springs, Pa.

Yoder, Adrian Jonathan, April 21, to Brian and Kristy Moyer Yoder, Mifflingburg, Pa.



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Zwart, Amelia Jane, May 7, to Jeffrey and Megan Halteman Zwart, South Bend, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Bass/Beck: Ronnie Bass, Osceola, Ind., and Tammy Beck, Osceola, April 30 in their home in Osceola.

Bradfield/Dudley: Donnie Bradfield, Waynesboro, Va., and Melissa Dudley, Waynesboro, April 30 at Lynside Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

Clift/Moyer: Lisa Clift, Creamery, Pa., and Jason Todd Moyer, Sellersville, Pa., April 30 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Friesen/Toews: Heidi Friesen and Lyndon Toews, April 9 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona, Man.

Haddad/Kilheffer: Peter Haddad, Scottdale, Pa., and Deborah Kilheffer, East Petersburg, Pa., May 1 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church.

Harder/Letkeman: Les Harder and Crystal Letkeman, April 16 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona, Man.

Harner/Taylor: Kathryn Harner, Lyndhurst, Va., and Robert Taylor, Waynesboro, Va., April 23 at Lynside Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

DEATHS

Birky, Ralph, 89, Kouts, Ind., died May 2. Spouse: Katherine Birky. Children: Sandra, Janie Helmuth-Dorn, Cheryl Gusler, Myrna Overholt; 12 grandchidlren; 17 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 6 at Hopewell Mennonite Church, Kouts.

Braun, John A., 87, Altona, Man., died May 5. Spouse: Sally Friesen Braun (deceased). Parents: Abram J. and Gertrude Klassen Braun. Children: Dolores (Dolly) Dianne (deceased), Joanne Carolyn Braun Johnson; four grandchildren. Funeral: May 10 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Cook, Robert, 86, Bluffton, Ohio, died April 5. Spouse: Pearl Weber Cook (deceased). Parents: Roy M. and Lydia Sutter Cook. Child: Jill Anne Ediger; three grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 9 at Chiles and Sons Lamar Funeral Home, Bluffton.

Derstine, Lizzie Nyce, 85, Towamencin, Pa., died April 19. Spouse: Norman A. Derstine (deceased). Parents: John W. and Lizzie Nyce. Children: Elizabeth Frederick, Mary Ann Cassel, Kathleen Harris, James; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 22 at Dock Woods Community, Towamencin.

Epp, Lillie Friesen, 85, Henderson, Neb., died April 26. Spouse: Harland Epp. Parents: Peter D. and Katharina Epp. Children: Joann Dick, Kenneth, Philip; four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 29 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

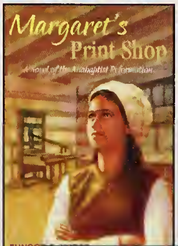
Fahndrich, Richard J., 72, Salem, Ore., died April 26 of cancer. Spouse: Luella Bender Fahndrich (deceased). Parents: John and Elizabeth Rediger Fahndrich. Children: Dave, Dan, Ben, Steve, Tim; 14 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 1 at Western Mennonite Church, Salem.

Forry, Alaina Elizabeth, two days, York, Pa., died April 7. Parents: Steve and Colleen Cronin Forry.

Goering, Lavina Ediger, 77, Topeka, Kan., died May 4 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Emil Goering. Children: Beth Tanner, Michael, Les, Tom, Jonas; nine grandchildren. Funeral: May 8 at Southern Hills Mennonite Church, Topeka.

Hershberger, Phebe Zook, 95, Goshen, Ind., died April 29. Spouse: Harold Daniel Hershberger (deceased). Parents: Levi and Nettie Yoder Zook. Children: Florence Nussbaum, Dale, Dwight; nine grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 2 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Coming in June



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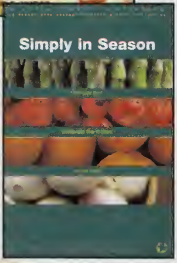

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Hooley, Clarence, 85, North Lawrence, Ohio, died May 1 following an extended illness. Spouse: Nettie Classen Hooley. Parents: David and Ella Horst Hooley. Children: David, Donald, Daniel; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 4 at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, North Lawrence.

Hostetler, Beulah Stauffer, 78, Goshen, Ind., died April 30 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: John Andrew Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Ezra and Irene Lehman Stauffer. Children: Ann, Mary Hoyt, Laura; seven grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Immel, Ruth Mullet, , Strasburg, Ohio, died May 15. Spouse: Robert Immel (deceased). Parents: Harvey and Prudence Gerber Mullet. Children: Brenda George, David, Steven; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman, Eva Brumbaugh, 83, Martinsburg, Pa., died April 29 of cancer. Spouse: Levi Kauffman (deceased). Parents: Lester and Lorena Smith Brumbaugh. Children: Barbara, Carol Watkins, Janet Shoenfelt, Audrey Packer, Linda Hopkins, David; 14 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at Martinsburg Mennonite Church.

Kaufman, Nola Schrag, 91, Moundridge, Kan., died May 3. Spouse: Waldo Joe Kaufman (deceased). Parents: Edward and Magdalena Schrag. Children: Steve, Tyrus; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 7 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

Krehbiel, Louise Schmidt, 86, Hesston, Kan., died April 29 of heart failure. Spouse: Rollins Krehbiel. Parents: J.R.F. and Elizabeth Franz Schmidt. Children: Sharon Stutzman, James, Wayne; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 4 at Hesston Inter-Mennonite Fellowship.

Lehman, Dorothy, 84, Bluffton, Ohio, died April 8. Spouse: Leland Lehman (deceased). Parents: Floyd J. and Bessie Wittenmyer Burner. Children: Barbara Boldt, Cynthia Linscheid, Stephen Lehman; four grandchildren. Funeral: April 12 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Lehman, Esther L., 86, Orrville, Ohio, died April 29. Spouse: Weldon Lehman (deceased). Parents: Oscar and Eulalia Feltis. Children: Sue Franks, Sandy Burkhalter, Jill Henery, Jackie Dietry; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Loewen, Roland P., 91, Baytown, Texas, died April 8. Spouse: Lorraine Polson Loewen. Parents: Peter C. and Katharina Riesen Loewen. Funeral: May 7 in Baytown.

Mast, Daniel E., 80, Oley, Pa., died April 21 of pneumonia. Spouse: Mildred I. Horning Mast. Parents: Samuel K. and Minnie Bewley Mast. Children: Peggy A., Russell L., Samuel L., Glenn J.; nine grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 24 at Oley Mennonite Church.

Miller, Paul J., 79, Greentown, Ohio, died May 2. Spouse: Iva Mae Miller. Parents: Jacob and Sarah Miller. Children: Raymond, James, Paul J., Kathy Murray, Karen Arnold, Martha Anderson, Mary Ann Mason; 16 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 5 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Vivian Eash, 90, Archbold, Ohio, died March 10. Spouse: Ervin Nelson Miller (deceased). Parents: Ervin and Ada Eash. Child: Ervin I.; six grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 13 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Powell, Samuel James Jr., 82, Amelia, Va., died April 22. Spouse: Dorothy Baer Powell. Parents: Samuel and Laura Shenk Powell. Children: Patricia Tiller, Sam Powell III, Linda Sheets, David; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 25 at Powhatan (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Savanick, Reuben H., 53, Scottdale, Pa., died April 23. Spouse: Martha "Marty" Detweiler Savanick. Parents: Paul and Ferne Hernley Savanick. Children: Benjamin, Nathan, Adam. Funeral: April 27 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Schrag, David D., 85, Moundridge, Kan., died April 15. Spouse: Wilda Stauffer Schrag. Parents: Reinhold and Marie Dirks Schrag. Children: Anita Lehman, Christine Diener, Mark, Jana Schopp, Scott; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: April 19 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Short, Kelly J., 40, Phoenix, Ariz., died April 15. Spouse: Tracy Short. Parents: Paul and Joyce Short. Children: Justin, Luke. Memorial service: April 20 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix.

Voran, Ted Ray, 76, Goessel, Kan., died April 19 of cancer. Spouse: Marlys Mae Kaufman Voran. Parents: Henry William and Lydia L. Voran. Children: Gene, Kent, Randy, Denise Goertzen; nine grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at First Mennonite Church of McPherson, Kan.

Willems, Abe L., 86, Goshen, Ind., died May 5. Spouse: Ruth Miller Willems. Parents: Abraham and Anna Isaac Willems. Children: Rhonda Swartzendruber, Arnold L., Kenneth D.; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 9 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, Ezra I., 60, Millmont, Pa., died April 2. Spouse: Ruth R. Yoder. Parents: Iddo I. and Sylvia Yoder. Children: Marlin, Carolyn Hoffmaster, Susan Wagner, Regina Miller; 11 grandchildren. Funeral: April 6 at Boyer Mennonite Church, Middleburg, Pa.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Lake Center Christian Schools seek applicants for the following full-time positions beginning August 2005: ***development director, media center director, guidance counselor, band instructor, junior high Bible instructor, junior high science instructor, high school English language arts instructor, high school math instructor***. Also, part-time positions available: ***kindergarten instructor, gifted instructor***. LCCS is located between Akron and Canton, Ohio, one hour south of Cleveland. The school is owned and operated by area Mennonite churches and enrolls 525 students, K-10. Eleventh grade will be added this year and 12th grade in 2006. Send resumé to or contact Matthew R. McMullen, Superintendent, Lake Center Christian Schools, 12893 Kaufman Ave. NW, Hartville, OH 44632; fax 330-877-2040; email lcc-smmcmullen@yahoo.com; phone: 330-877-2049.

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Search process: Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or resumé may be submitted to Rick Stiffney, Chairman of the Search Committee, at andreab@mennoniteeducation.org, or through postal mail to GC Presidential Search Committee, Mennonite Education Agency, 63846 County Road 35 Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621.

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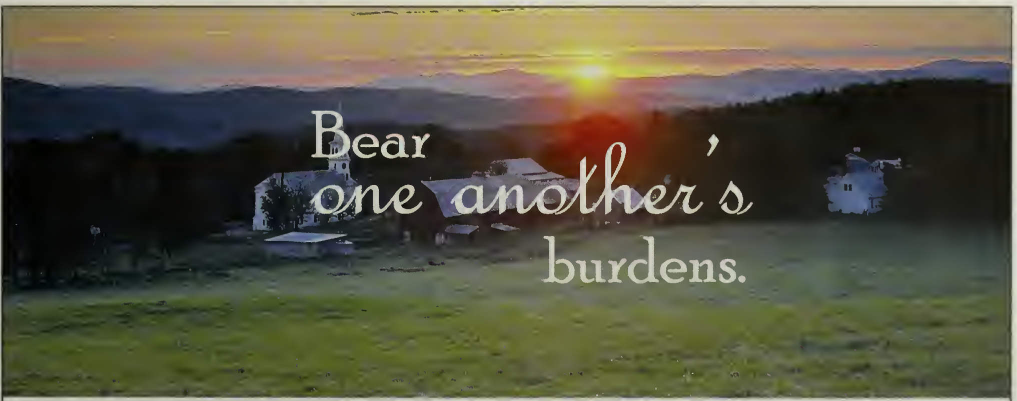

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Grieving the Terri Schiavo case

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu.

I grieve the Terri Schiavo case for some less-than-common reasons. To be sure, I feel for a husband who lost a wife, for parents who lost a daughter and for a family torn asunder in front of a watching world. But this case revealed things about our society that I grieve even more deeply.

For instance, I grieve TV and radio coverage that distorted this case under the guise of being "balanced" or "fair." Daily we were told that "some doctors" believe that Mrs. Schiavo was in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) but that "other doctors" believe that she was not PVS and could benefit from therapy.

In one sense, this type of reporting was true, both sides of the conflict had found physicians to back them up. But most physicians with the appropriate experience and credentials judged Mrs. Schiavo to be PVS and in a medically futile state with 0 percent chance of recovery. By contrast, most physicians claiming that Mrs. Schiavo was not PVS lacked the proper credentials and could provide no research or evidence to substantiate their claims that people in Mrs. Schiavo's condition would benefit from further therapy. The media's reporting of Terri Schiavo's medical condition—presenting her virtually certain PVS condition as if it were in doubt—was a grave disservice to society and is but one example of how the pretext of balance distorted the case. As far as I can tell, what such balance achieved was to keep us focused on the family conflict; after all, both sides had "some doctors" on their side.

The Schiavo case illustrates social problems with knowing how to pay for health care.

I also grieve that most public discussions of the Terri Schiavo case failed to link it to larger social questions in health care. For example, we need to talk together about the justice of maintaining patients who are PVS (currently somewhere between 20,000 and 35,000 in the United States) while 44 million go without health insurance. Surely justice requires that we somehow balance the competing moral claims on society's resources of those at the end of life with the millions who go without proper access to health care.

We also need to talk about how we finance health care. Schiavo's care was underwritten by a legal settlement and the federal government. Yet Congress just enacted legislation that significantly limits future legal settlements and is poised to cut $10 billion from Medicaid over the next five years. The Schiavo case thus illustrates social problems with knowing how to pay for health care. I wish we saw in the Schiavo case an opportunity to engage in a broad, social dialogue about issues of justice, access and financing in health care.

I also grieve attempts by the legislative and executive branches of government, at the Florida state and federal levels, to intervene in this case. Had they succeeded, their actions would have set a dangerous precedent, allowing these branches of government to intervene arbitrarily in individual, personal medical decisions. (To see what is at stake, consider the hypothetical scenario in which those same elected officials force the removal of feeding and hydration from a PVS patient caught in the midst of a family conflict.) Their behavior in this case is especially troubling, since the courts continually found convincing evidence that Mrs. Schiavo would not want to be kept alive with a feeding tube. I am grateful that the courts prevented this unprecedented move by the other governmental branches, but elected officials' readiness to determine the outcome of this case does not bode well for personal and religious liberties.

Most deeply I grieve the willingness and speed with which people, including many Christians, made judgments about the character and motivations of the different actors involved in this case. I frequently heard Christians praise Terri Schiavo's parents as loving and courageous but condemn her husband as uncaring, unfaithful, greedy and even murderous. Yet, like me, these Christians never met Terri Schiavo or her parents or husband, let alone spend quality time getting to know them and hearing their stories. And, like me, these Christians know little about what the rest of the parents' and husband's lives reveal of their characters.

Christ warned us against judging others and advised us to attend to the "log" in our own eyes (Matthew 7:1-5). Perhaps the Schiavo case offers us an opportunity to look at some of our own logs—e.g., media "balance," which is really bias; failure to address justice, access and financing in health care; overreaching elected officials and a readiness to judge the motives and character of those we do not know.

Discernment

"I hope students will help the church wisely discern practices that reflect the light of God in Christ."

Gayle Gerber Koontz models this for students, directed her energies as a theologian and ethicist to issues emerging in the church. She has contributed to discernment regarding peace theology and the relations between women and men in the church. Currently she is working articulating a theology and ethics of place, helping the church understand especially our place with God.

Gayle also
- has taught in the Philippines, Rwanda and Burundi at the invitation of the church.
- coedited *A Mind Patient and Untamed: Assessing the Theological Legacy of John Howard Yoder,* Cascadia, 2003.

Gayle Gerber Koontz
Professor of Theology and Ethics

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Everett J. Thomas

Honor Anabaptist distinctives

Conversations with other Christians about church unity are breaking out across the Mennonite church—and with some unfamiliar language. Fostering ecumenical relations, however, must have one goal: to contribute distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs as we interact with and learn from the global Christian community.

One such conversation occurred in New Holland, Pa., in early April and drew an unusually large crowd ("Reconciliation Conference Draws 600," May 3). It was organized by a Lancaster (Pa.) Conference bishop, although Lancaster Conference did not sponsor the event. The participants—which included Evangelical-Reformed pastors from Switzerland as well as charismatic Amish from Montana—revealed a peculiar point of view about Swiss Anabaptists in the 1500s. In this case, yearning for restored relations between Christians produced a strange confession: that Anabaptist "sons" had rejected the Reformed "fathers" in Zurich during the Reformation.

There have been numerous confessional statements from the Swiss Reformed since 1925. The most recent was during special meetings June 26, 2004, in Zurich and included the unveiling of a memorial marker on the Limmat River to mark the spot where six Anabaptists—including Felix Manz—were drowned.

If we get our act together, our Anabaptist distinctives can be the gift we offer to the broader Christian church.

Such efforts at confession and reconciliation—some sanctioned by Mennonite Church USA while others are not—reveal an abiding interest in right relationships with sisters and brothers in the Christian church around the world.

Pope John Paul II's death also highlighted our relationships to the largest Christian body, and his reaching out to other Christians is a high-water mark in church to church relations. Perhaps because of John Paul's legacy, readers who participated in our latest Web site poll voted overwhelmingly for Mennonite Church USA to interact more with other Christian groups (page 5).

But what exactly is driving the current interest in relating to other Christians? And what exactly are we being asked to give up in order for other Christians to accept us into communion?

One place such questions could be answered is within a new group of U.S. Christian denominations called Christian Churches Together. Mennonite Church USA delegates will hear about this new opportunity at Charlotte 2005 and be asked to discuss whether our denomination should start a two-year inquiry process about membership in CCT.

To introduce some of the issues, Albert J. Meyer summarizes some of his ideas as volunteer staff for the Executive Board's Interchurch Relations Committee (page 12). Meyer offers pointers for us about relating to other Christians. The most important is to honor what has made us distinct.

"There is a body of distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite beliefs for which some of our forebears have given their lives, for which some of our sisters and brothers are suffering today and for which we are responsible to witness in our time," Meyer says.

The problem is that we are not all so committed to these distinctives, and we are not all ready to honor what has made us distinct. Some members of Mennonite Church USA seem to view these distinctives as liabilities—stumbling blocks to forming loving relations with other Christians.

The problem is exasperated by a gulf between two groups. Academics, theologians and historians carry on vigorous conversations with counterparts in other denominations but are not talking much to folks in the pew who have there own ideas about church history and Anabaptist theology. In turn, folks in the pew participate in significant "ecumenical decisions" without much thought when it comes to using curricula from other denominations. Or we borrow freely from popular Christian media without considering the effect such borrowing might have on our Anabaptist theology and practice.

Therefore, the most urgent conversation about relating to other Christians must happen among ourselves. As we get our act together, we can offer a great gift to the broader Christian church: the unique story and distinctive beliefs that have been at the core of Anabaptist-Mennonite faithfulness for centuries.—*ejt*

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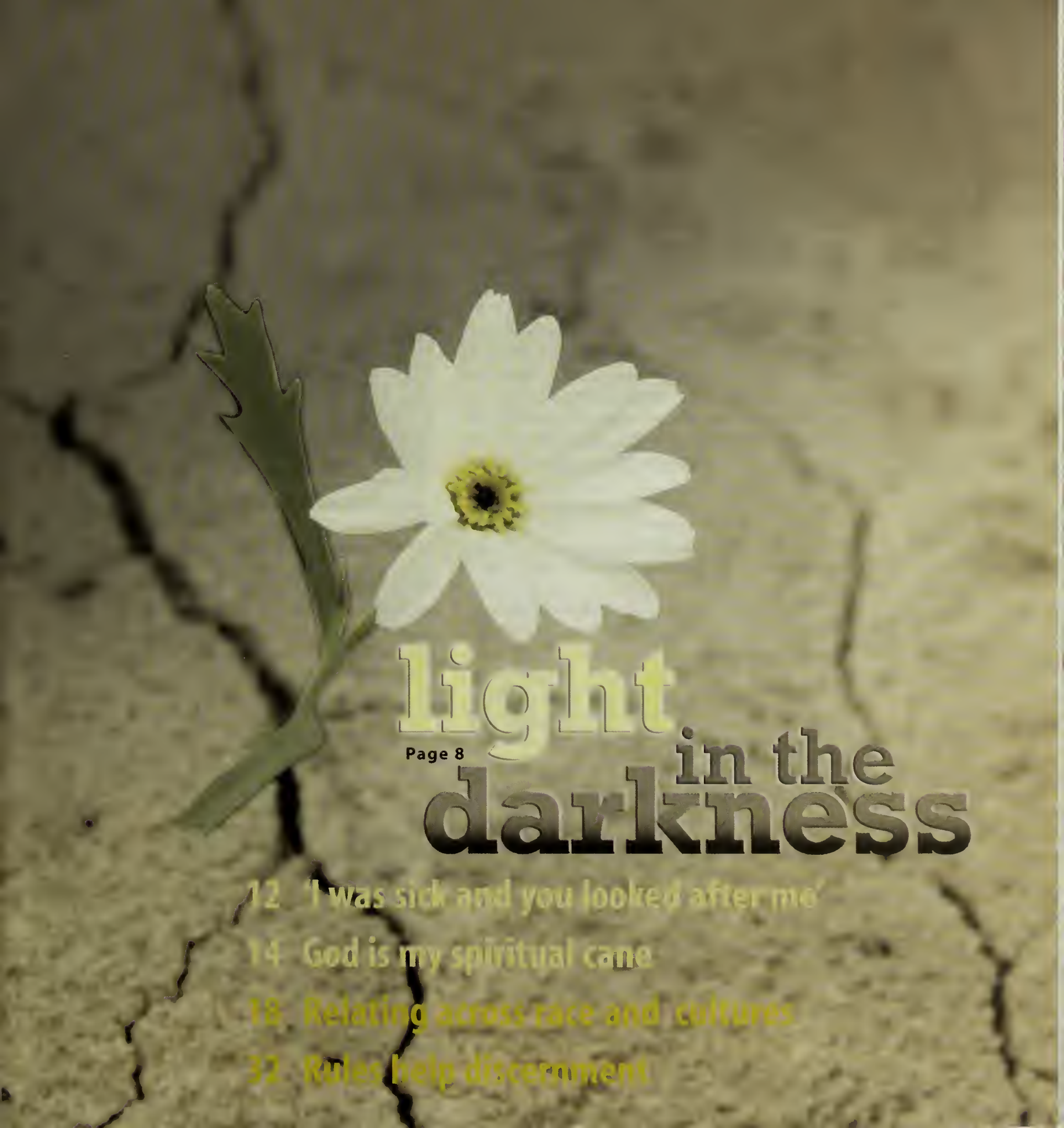
June 21, 2005



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Life is too short to be bitter

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Life is too short to be bitter, get even or get back. Life is too short to stew in the regrets of what might have been. Bitterness regurgitates stories of how awful others have treated us. It focuses on trying to change others, because they are the problem that needs to be fixed. It leads us to harm others, often under the guise of setting them right.

When faced with the inevitable injustices and tragedies of life, we can become bitter or renew our commitment to make our world better at least in some small way. With the death of his only daughter, Julie, in the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, Bud Welsh sank into a world of emotional and spiritual quicksand. He was bitter against God for allowing such a tragedy to happen. If Julie had had 20 seconds more, she would have been to the safety of her office on the backside of the building. Bud felt an overwhelming bitterness at Timothy McVeigh and any who had helped him carry out his horrendous act. In his bitterness Bud drank to numb the pain and get some sleep at night. After nine months he realized his life was spiraling out of control, and he was being destroyed by the same hate and bitterness that had driven McVeigh to his awful act of revenge.

As Bud mourned the brokenness of his own life ("Blessed are the poor in spirit") and the bitterness of his heart ("Blessed are those who mourn"), he was given the heart-healing miracle of forgiveness and the growing desire to make our world better at least in some small way. He experienced God's grace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). He committed his life to stopping the cycle of hatred and revenge. He spoke out against the government-sanctioned killing of Timothy McVeigh, then testified against capital punishment in Terry Nichols' trial. He discovered peacemaking.

Bud noted that other family members of victims in the bombing expected they would find some release and relief in the capital killing of McVeigh, but it didn't happen. Bitterness has an insatiable appetite. Revenge—getting even, getting back, giving them what they deserve—is never satisfied. Life is just too short to remain bitter.

I met Bud Welsh and heard him speak at a Western District Conference gathering in Oklahoma City. It wasn't hard to see how Bud's life was enriched (blessed) as he let God heal the bitterness of his heart and pursued God's way of making peace.

Bitterness often invades our lives much closer to home. Spouses are careless, if not cruel, with their words and actions. Children act foolishly in defiance of parental counsel and authority. Parents act harshly with threats and ridicule, trying to intercept a child's destructive direction. Siblings strive to get their just share of the inheritance. The inevitable encounters with sin in the family circle can be an incubator for bitterness. "We don't talk anymore" or, "We don't see each other anymore" are signs of festering bitterness.

Bitterness can infect church relations like a winter respiratory flu that keeps you awake at night. It can even infect pastors. We feel underappreciated and criticized. I don't know of a pastor who has not been wounded in the course of ministry. Are we going to get bitter or get better?

In *Steps to Hope*, Joyce Shutt writes: "We can't change the world or even those close to us, but we can change ourselves and become the [people] God calls us to be. We can't end another's greed but can work on our own selfish and greedy impulses. We can't make others peaceful, but we can curb our own violent impulses and seek new responses patterned after those we see in Christ. … We become centered, serene, not easily threatened. We become peacemakers." TM

The**Mennonite**

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

MEA faces deficit

An article in the May 17 edition ("Mennonite Education Agency Faces Deficit") describes a real challenge. I am taking this opportunity to update readers on progress toward our goal. The article noted a $50,000 deficit, and I am gratified to report that the people of the church have responded so far with gifts of almost $15,000 to help meet the need.

In the May 17 article, the description of Mennonite Education Agency as an "umbrella organization for schools, colleges, universities and seminaries that relate to Mennonite Church USA" is perhaps inadequate. MEA is one of Mennonite Church USA's four churchwide ministries. Our role, per the Nashville 2001 delegate assembly, is to strengthen the church through education—by working with both the Mennonite education system and with church members who learn, teach and lead in other educational settings.

The funding challenge continues: to overcome MEA's operational deficit and to meet the needs of Mennonite Church USA students who desire to learn and to serve the church through our Racial/Ethnic Leadership Education programs. We are privileged to be one part of the holistic witness of Mennonite Church USA, and we understand that others face similar challenges. We appreciate all who have given and prayerfully anticipate the continued investment by households and congregations in the church's missional future.—*Carlos Romero, executive director of Mennonite Education Agency*

Camp Friedenswald denies space

As a young Mennonite man recovering from gender confusion and same-sex attraction, I strongly affirm the decision of Camp Friedenswald to discontinue hosting the spring retreat of the Brethren and Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Concerns. I admire the sincerity of my sisters and brothers who attended the retreat and I mourn the pain and confusion that has wounded us all in our search for love and identity. But I want to state clearly that what young men and women in our position need is not a "Queer Camp" at church facilities but consistent, caring love and guidance as we die to ourselves and rise to new life and wholeness in Christ.—*Forrest L. Moyer, Palm, Pa.*

I read with interest that Indiana-Michigan Conference is experiencing significant budget constraints because of decreased conference membership and associated loss of revenue ("2005 Directory Shows Losses From 2003," May 17). In the same issue it was reported that Camp Friedenswald was no longer available for BMC retreats ("Camp Friedenswald Denies BMC Space," May 17). At first glance it would seem counterproductive to discontinue that source of camp usage and income. But if I were a cynical person I might see a connection between these two bits of news. I might think that the camp board was trying to appease the majority in the denomination and lessen some of the current anxiety by punishing gays, lesbians and their allies. It seems to me that BMC's calling the move "unprincipled" is a restrained response. I have other words for it.—*Roy G. Dahl, Hamilton, Ont.*

Camp Friedenswald responds

Several readers have raised concerns with the Camp Friedenswald board regarding the press release in *The Mennonite* (see also Readers Say, June 7).

Advocacy organizations often use the press to present one perspective without acknowledging the full story. BMC was using their retreat publicity to blur the lines between Camp Friedenswald being the location for the event vs. supporting and advocating for the event. This was exemplified when BMC was unwilling to dialogue about using such terms as "Queer Camp at Camp Friedenswald" in its publicity. These types of activities led to the decision not to allow BMC to return.

The board acknowledges mistakes in the way the decision was communicated to the leadership of BMC. At the same time, the distortion in the media by BMC appears to confirm the board's concern that the organization is unwilling to be accountable for their actions both within the church and with specific issues such as this.

A final point of clarification: Camp Friedenswald is sponsored by the Central District Conference, not Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference—*Curt Bechler, chair, Camp Friedenswald board of directors*

IN THIS ISSUE

Janae Yoder, who graduated last month from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., offers a thoughtful reminder about depression (page 8). She notes that "many people who struggle with depression have felt ignored or stigmatized by their congregation." Becky Oberg (page 12), a freelance writer in Indianapolis, shares her experience with mental illness while unable to afford health insurance. She describes what happened in a psychiatric emergency room and the way her severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder were treated during the three days she was there. Oberg also offers suggestions on ways to fix the U.S. mental health-care system. Carole Ricketts Walker, who graduated last month from Goshen (Ind.) College, shares her experiences with Mixed Connective Tissue Disease (page 14) and says, "My suffering … can be transformed to help others."—*Editors*

Focus on health-care access

I am trying to understand why Mennonite Church USA is spending so much time and energy trying to influence government policy on health-care access when we do not do that with abortion. It seems to me that on this important life-and-death subject we should be just as vocal as we are on health care or any other issue. After all, thousands of unborn children are killed every year by abortion, but our strange silence on it is puzzling.—*John E. Eby, Lancaster, Pa.*

In relation to the May 17 article, "Delegates Will Discuss Health-Care Access Statement": It is good for us to consider health-care issues we encounter within our conferences as well as those within our congregations. We have a good mutual aid plan for our members, but there are a few who are left out of the MMA program: my wife and I are two of them. Upon our retirement from Comins Mennonite Church and our move to Georgia we were informed that our MMA contract could not be honored in Georgia in 1989. In the meantime, MMA can now offer service in Georgia, but due to my heart surgery nine years ago we cannot be reinstated due to this preexisting condition.—*Russell Welty, Stockbridge, Ga.*

Why the cold shoulder?

I affirm all nine guidelines Albert J. Meyer gave for engaging in relationships with other denominations ("Renew Your Whole Church, O Lord," June 7). In particular I note number four, which gives "priority to conversations with those most eager to converse with us on serious issues of faith and practice."

The World Council of Churches proclaimed 2001-2010 "The Decade to Overcome Violence." German Mennonites got this program onto the WCC agenda. In June 2001 there was a conference of Historic Peace Churches (WCC) at Bienenberg, Switzerland, to reaffirm continuation as peace churches. Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the WCC, addressed the gathering. Participants later spent a day at WCC headquarters in Geneva. Papers from the conference were published as *Seeking Cultures of Peace* by Cascadia Publishing House, with WCC as co-publisher alongside Herald Press. These actions signal obvious interest in conversations with Mennonites by the WCC. The WCC membership includes many churches in the five categories of Evangelicals, Orthodox, Catholic, Pentecostal Christians and mainline Protestants. In light of these observations, why is Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A. now put forward as the only multidenominational structure for ecumenical dialogue? Why has Mennonite Church USA turned a cold shoulder to conversation with the WCC these past five years?—*J. Denny Weaver, Bluffton, Ohio*

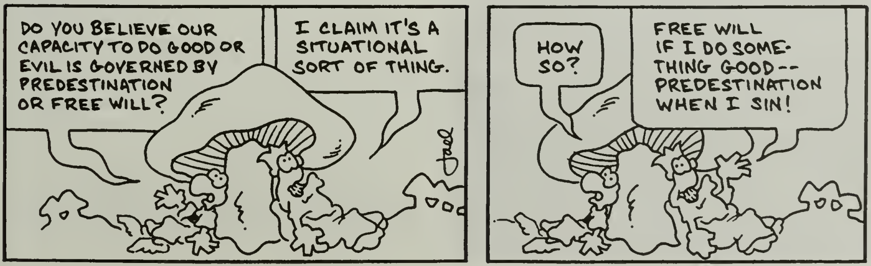
Speaking with boldness

In unsettling complement to the Charlotte 2005 theme, "Can't Keep Quiet," Acts 4:29 reminds us that the apostle Peter asked God to grant his listeners boldness in speaking the Word. "Now Speak With Boldness" is a one-day, independently-sponsored event to be held at Charlotte, N.C., on July 7, at which featured speakers Ingrid Rimland Zundel, Michael A. Hoffman II and I will give presentations on the U.S. political kidnapping and Canadian show trial of Ernst Zundel, Talmudic racism, Freemasonry and other topics of relevance to thinking Mennonites. The event will be open to all. More information is available at www.goodinformation.org. —*Bruce Leichty, Clovis, Ca.*

Need bylaw change

I want to express my appreciation for the May 17 issue of *The Mennonite.* Bringing together such a wide panorama of subjects and their writers takes a lot of editorial energy and involves some risks. We hope the Mennonite Church USA bylaws change proposed in the editorial ("The Mennonite Voice") is adopted. The third goal will be a critical part of contributing effectively.—*Don Minter, Goshen, Ind.*

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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Joel
HOW SO?
FREE WILL IF I DO SOMETHING GOOD-- PREDESTINATION WHEN I SIN!

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

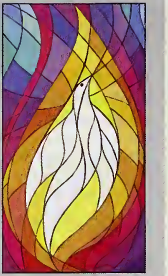
Regarding mental illness, our congregation is:

- ○ Comfortable discussing appropriate care (36%)
- ○ Not comfortable (7%)
- ○ It depends on the illness (32%)
- ○ Not sure (25%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Note: We reserve the right to contact an institution that is criticized in a letter and offer the institution an opportunity to publish a response in the same issue. We also remind letter-writers that *The Mennonite* has a moratorium on articles and letters from readers that address Mennonite Church USA's teaching position on sexual orientation and practice. We will, however, publish news articles about actions taken by Mennonite Church USA entities, and we publish letters that respond to those actions.—*Editor*

IN BRIEF



Award-winning window

A design by Merrill Miller, Scottdale, Pa., was selected in a competition sponsored by The Union Project, which is restoring Pittsburgh's former Union Baptist Church to provide space for artists, community builders and people of faith. Entitled "Flames," the window will be built by a class at the Union Project and replace an original main entrance window that is beyond repair.—*Union Project*

Apology to Native Americans

On May 25, the U.S. Senate Indian Affairs Committee held its first-ever hearing on a resolution of apology to Native Americans for their treatment by the United States. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who chairs the committee, said he will work for prompt passage of the statement from his committee to the full Senate. A similar resolution has been introduced in the House. The full text of Resolution of Apology, S.J. 15, is at www.NativeRes.org. —*www.Indianz.Com*

North Central Conference joins MC USA

GLEN FLORA, Wis.—The last conference to hold provisional membership in Mennonite Church USA voted to become full members at a June 3 delegate meeting. The vote was 82 percent in favor of continuing membership in Mennonite Church USA.

"The vote followed months of studying background informational materials," said moderator Galen Kauffman and secretary Elwood Schrock in a June 7 release. "Deep feelings were expressed on both sides of the issue as the Lord's will was discerned—first of all to be faithful to God and his Word, second to maintain the unity of the North Central Conference and third to give and receive encouragement and support of the larger Mennonite Church."

North Central Conference has 504 members in 13 congregations scattered across Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Ontario.

Conferences had until 2007 to decide whether they would become full members of Mennonite Church USA. NCC's action fulfills a prediction made by Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag in October 2004 when he said to the Executive Board, "When we get to [Charlotte 2005] next summer, we will have no provisional conferences and no one will have dropped out ... two years early."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Emily Will

Tsunami relief team

Former participants in Mennonite Central Committee's International Visitor Exchange Program are now forming the backbone of MCC's tsunami response in Indonesia. From left are James "Jimmy" Yoshua Harso, Ika Widhiana and Dwi Budiarto. In Andhra Pradesh, India, an area where the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami badly damaged the local economy, MCC is working with Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship and Mennonite Brethren Development Organization to restore family livelihoods. MCC is providing $125,800 to the joint project.—*MCC*

Mennonite Church Canada has quorum

WINNIPEG—After an anxious period of doubt, it is now certain that there will be a quorum of delegates to make decisions in Mennonite Church Canada's annual assembly at Charlotte 2005. As of June 6, a total of 292 Canadian adults have registered—237 as delegates. Quorum for a Mennonite Church Canada assembly requires 200 congregational delegates (209 have declared) and 26 area conference delegates (28 have declared).

"A number of adults who had registered to attend but had not declared delegate status have now chosen to serve the church as delegates," said general secretary Dan Nighswander.

Since 2000, Canadian assemblies have averaged 582 total adult registrants (417 delegates). Several opportunities will be available in Charlotte for Canadian delegates to discuss the future of Mennonite Church Canada's relationship with Mennonite Church USA, including the future of joint assemblies.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

Ethiopian church largest national church

STRASBOURG, France—There are now more baptized believers in the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia than in any other national Mennonite-related church or conference in the world, according to the latest census figures.

The Ethiopian church (MKC) now numbers 120,610 baptized members, more than 9,000 more than Mennonite Church USA, which has 111,347 members. Mennonite Church USA had been the largest Mennonite church.

In 2003, Mennonite Church USA reported 110,253 baptized members while the MKC reported 98,025. New figures show an increase of 22,585 members for MKC and 1,094 in Mennonite Church USA.

Mulugeta Zewdie, general secretary of MKC, cites six strategies for church growth that the MKC practices: suitable church structure for evangelism; evangelism, discipleship training, church planting and follow up; formal and informal education; prayer and fasting; lay ministry; and each member being empowered for witnessing by the Holy Spirit.

"MKC's experience of church growth is not a new happening; it is one among many in the footsteps of early church evangelism practice," says Zewdie. "That does not mean that we are photocopies of the original [church], but we have the same truth. The similarities can be expressed in many ways."

The most recent compilation of statistics on all Mennonite, BIC and related churches worldwide was published in 2003. The next one is expected in 2006.—*MWC News Service*

Zachary Albrecht

Porridge for orphans

Due to the high rate of men and women of child-bearing age vho were infected with HIV and died, there are around 80,000 rphaned children in Swaziland. At this soup kitchen and care acility visited by the Peace and Justice Journalism project eam from Goshen (Ind.) College in March, several hundred hildren who have been orphaned or who are at risk receive a ot meal of millet porridge.—*Goshen College*

Paraguay's president joins celebration

ASUNCIÓN, Paraguay—The Conference of Mennonite Brethren churches in Paraguay held its 50th anniversary celebrations during Holy Week. A special service on March 27 was attended by all Mennonite Brethren churches in Paraguay as well as former missionaries who started work in the country. Paraguay's president, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, and his family also attended. Maria Gloria Penayo de Duarte Frutos, wife of the president, is a member of the Mennonite Brethren congregation here. Mennonite World Conference is planning to hold the 2009 Assembly Gathered in Paraguay.—*MWC*

First meeting with Church of God

CLEVELAND, Tenn.—For the first time ever, a U.S. Mennonite church initiated ecumenical contact with another Christian denomination. On May 26-28, three representatives from Mennonite Church USA met with representatives of the Church of God, headquartered here. The gathering was an initial attempt to discover whether the two denominations might provide mutual insight and encouragement through continuing conversations or other joint ventures. Impetus for this meeting arose from about 40 participants at a Mennonite Church USA interchurch relations consultation in July 2004. That group strongly recommended that Mennonite Church USA explore relationships with Pentecostals because, at their origins, most Pentecostal groups held some similar convictions, most notably pacifism.

After a day of interchange, the six participants decided to ask their church leaders to support another gathering, preferably in April 2006, to explore how churches in mission can be empowered by the Holy Spirit (a Pentecostal theme) and retain their distinctive Christian emphases (a Mennonite theme).

According to Jim Schrag, Mennonite Church USA executive director and one of the participants, these concerns are central to Mennonite Church USA's stress on being a missional church.

Mennonite Church USA has held formal discussions with only one other denomination: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Those conversations, which concluded in March 2004, were initiated by ELCA.—*Thomas Finger*

Lawrence Hart to receive Peace Pitcher

ELKHART, Ind.—A Cheyenne peace chief dedicated to preserving the Cheyenne heritage will receive the Peace Pitcher during the Charlotte 2005 convention from the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA. Lawrence Hart, pastor of Koinonia Mennonite Church and executive director of the Cheyenne Cultural Center, both in Clinton, Okla., will receive the pitcher, which is presented every two years to recipients who have devoted their lives to peace and justice.

Lawrence Hart

Hart took the peace chief mantle, which requires living by and spreading the traditional Cheyenne philosophy of nonviolence, from his grandfather, who raised him for the first six years of his life. A former U.S. Marine fighter pilot, he left the military when he accepted the peace chief role. Hart says the peace chief tradition harkens back hundreds of years to a chief named Sweet Medicine, a cultural hero considered by the Cheyenne to be a prophet. Sweet Medicine instituted the council of 44 peace chiefs, which is a group of leaders who are committed to following Sweet Medicine's teachings.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

IN BRIEF

Bohn

Gingrich

AMBS honors two

Ann Gingrich of Goshen, Ind., and E. Stanley Bohn of Newton, Kan., were honored with the 2005 Alumni Ministry and Service Awards by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. The awards will be presented to the recipients in their local areas this summer.

Gingrich and Paul, her husband, served as missionaries in Ethiopia under Eastern Mennonite Mission Board from 1953 to 1969. Her most recent ministry is pastoral counseling for survivors of sexual abuse.

Bohn was involved in congregational ministry during and even before he was a student at Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago in 1954. He was involved in congregations stretching from Kansas City, Kan., to Manhattan, N.Y., over a period of more than 50 years.—*AMBS*

Light in the

darkness

How to support those with depression in the church

by Janae Yoder

God, I feel like my world is crashing down on me; I'm dying here Lord. Today I wanted to crawl into a corner and die. I'm exhausted, I have cried out to you for relief from this state of continual darkness, but it hasn't come yet. God, do you love me, or have you completely turned your back on me? I desire to be healed and restored, to be able to experience peace and joy again in my life. Please bring me some relief; I can't go on like this.—A personal journal entry on Feb. 11, 2003

I wrote this in my journal while struggling with severe depression. Even though I still struggle at times with feeling depressed, I have been able to see God's healing hand at work in my life in these past two years. More people in the church need to become aware of this common mental illness, reach out and better support those struggling with depression.

Depressive disorders are often viewed by society as illnesses that affect weak or overemotional people, but according to the National Mental Health Association, the number of Americans who experience depression is increasing. In the next year, more than 19 million Americans will most likely experience a depressive disorder.

The number of adults facing depression within the United States is increasing, and since church members are a small microcosm of the larger society, it is safe to assume that a significant number of adults within the church are struggling with depression. Many of these people suffer in silence because they feel their church does not understand depression and they fear being associated with the stigmas attached with the depressed.

What is depression? Everyone experiences feelings of sadness and hopelessness, but it becomes a problem when those intense maladaptive feelings overwhelm a person for a long time and affect their ability to function.

Depression is divided into three categories: major depression, dysthymia and bipolar disorder. Major depression is a sorrow that does not end with the passage of time, seems exaggerated or even inappropriate, is unrelated to any discernable cause and disrupts one's general functioning.

Many suffer in silence because they feel their church does not understand depression and they fear being associated with the stigmas attached with the depressed.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Dysthymia is a less severe type of depression, involving long-term, chronic symptoms that do not disable a person but keeps them from functioning well. The cumulative affect of experiencing decades of mild depression is often as devastating as episodes of severe depression

Bipolar disorder, or manic-depressive illness, is characterized by cycling mood changes that include severe high emotional states called mania along with extreme low depressed states. Sometimes these mood changes occur rapidly, but often they come on gradually. Mania symptoms include being overactive and overtalkative, having a great deal of energy and an inability to make rational decisions.

Misconceptions: Many in America have misconceptions about depression. One is that depression is caused by a spiritual problem. In the book *No Longer Alone*, a woman suffering from schizophrenia and depression sought out help from her pastor. The pastor said she "should not take medication but that if she could trust in God and confess her sins then all would be well. To take medication means that you have a lack of faith."

Those who maintain a connection with their spiritual beliefs tend to be more satisfied with their lives than those who do not believe in a higher power.

Christians are just as prone to developing a mental or physical illness as those in the general society. Christians will struggle in this life in God. That does not mean we discount the power of prayer and God's ability to heal, but sometimes God's timing and healing look different from what we expect. At times the church makes depression too simplistic and disregards the physiological, psychological and genetic dispositions that interact to cause depression.

Educating our churches is the key to breaking down depression stereotypes. One church I know of has worked at educating its members about mental illnesses by addressing the issue in the worship service and in Sunday school classes.

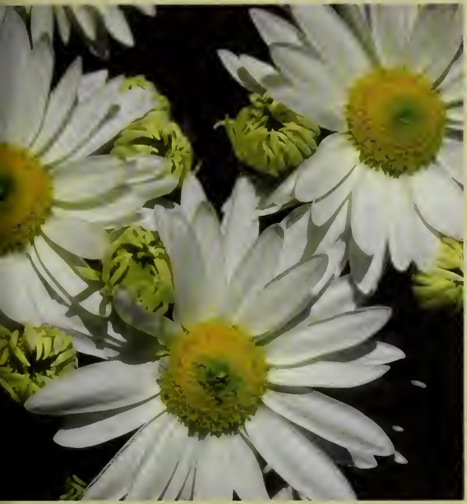
Three interconnected factors cause depression: chemical imbalances in the brain, psychosocial stressors and heredity factors. People with depression often have an absolute or relative depletion of certain chemicals called neurotransmitters in their brain. Neurotransmitters such as Serotonin are the part of the brain responsible for transmitting electrical nerve impulses from one neuron to another. The ability for neurotransmitters to carry impulses across the synaptic cleft, the gap between the neurons, directly affects how a person can process thoughts and send messages in their brain. A person low on neurotransmitters is not able to process messages as quickly or efficiently. This leads to a depressed thought pattern. Many people who struggle with depression take an antidepressant, which increases the amount of neurotransmitters in their brain.

A second cause of depression is when a person experiences a high incidence of stressful life events in a short period of time. These psychosocial stressors may include situations that lower a person's self-esteem, seem to lack a solution or threaten to take a person's life. When an individual is bombarded with stressors, their brain seems to shut down as a coping mechanism resulting in a depressed feeling.

Heredity influences play a part in determining if a person develops depression or not. Studies have shown that the prevalence of mood disorders such as depression is higher among blood relatives of people already diagnosed with mood disorders. It is estimated that genes contribute one-third to half of the tendency for a person to develop depression.

Religious involvement: Recent studies have found associations between an individual's religious involvement and their positive mental health outcomes. These outcomes include having higher self-rated levels of both psychological and physical well-being, reduced levels of anxiety and alleviation of depressive symptoms.

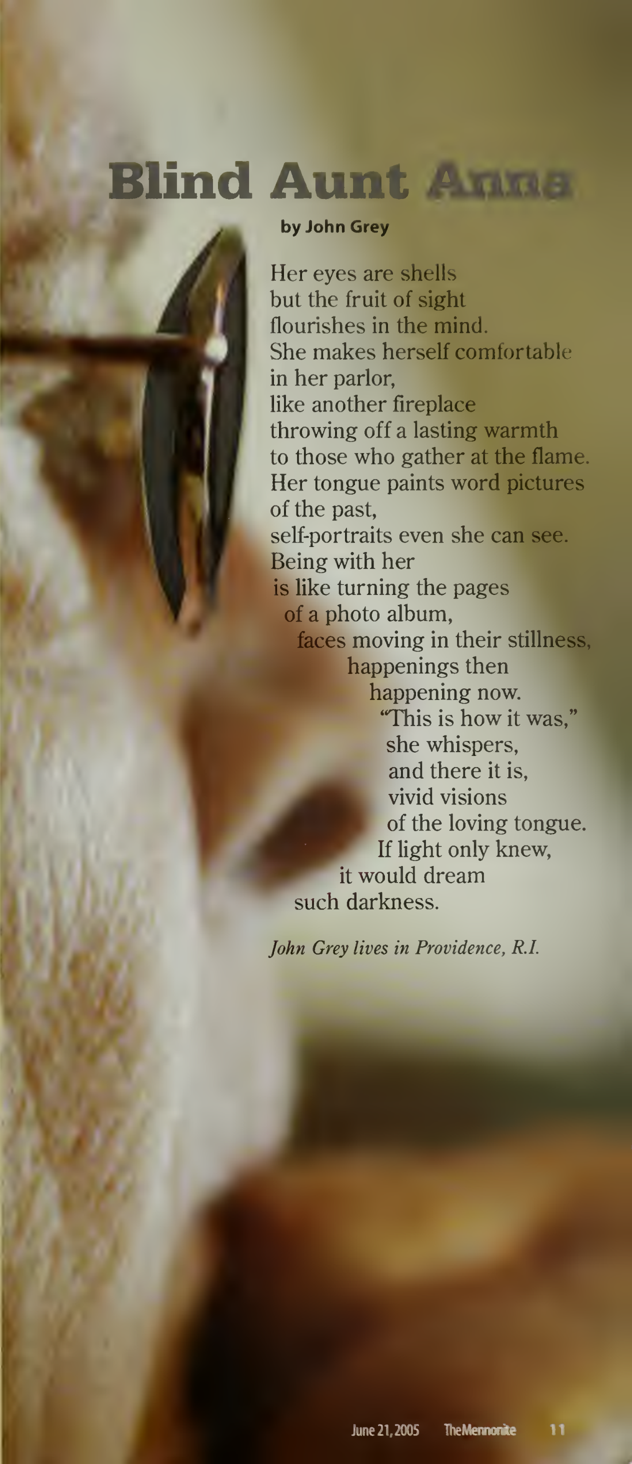
Studies also have shown that those who maintain a connection with their spiritual beliefs tend to be more satisfied with their lives than those who do not believe in a higher power. They believe their life has purpose and meaning that can sustain and energize individuals facing depression. Many have reported that they felt greater levels of support in their lives and were a lot more successful in dealing with life issues because they were part of a church community. An important way to support those with depression is to start a support group at your church.



An important way to support people struggling with depression is to simply listen to their stories. One pastor who struggled with severe depression said many people in her church "were well-intentioned in their efforts to help, but their advice or solutions, while appropriate for them, made me feel like they were more concerned with their own agenda than they were concerned about listening to my story." The pain of a depressed individual does not require fixing but attentive listening. Often when people feel listened to, they feel they have been cared for.

Many people who struggle with depression have felt ignored or stigmatized by their congregations. It can seem like a hopeless situation to undo the hurt people with mental illnesses have experienced in the church. But if congregations take small steps toward becoming better educated about this population, are willing to break down stigmas against the mentally ill, encourage support groups and truly listen to one another, then those with depression in the church will feel supported and able to share more easily about their struggles with depression.

Janae Yoder graduated in social work last month from Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.



Blind Aunt Anna

by John Grey

Her eyes are shells
but the fruit of sight
flourishes in the mind.
She makes herself comfortable
in her parlor,
like another fireplace
throwing off a lasting warmth
to those who gather at the flame.
Her tongue paints word pictures
of the past,
self-portraits even she can see.
Being with her
is like turning the pages
of a photo album,
faces moving in their stillness,
happenings then
happening now.
"This is how it was,"
she whispers,
and there it is,
vivid visions
of the loving tongue.
If light only knew,
it would dream
such darkness.

John Grey lives in Providence, R.I.

‘I was sick *and yo*

The churc

by **Becky Oberg**

An individual with a diagnosis of severe mental illness will die an average of 10 years earlier than a person without that diagnosis, according to Christine M. Jewell of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Indiana Chapter.

“Part of this is the stress of the illness, the side effects of medication, and the high suicide rate,” Jewell says. “Unfortunately, in my opinion, the primary reason is that people with severe mental illness, like many other chronic illness groups, get little or no medical care.”

The President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health Executive Summary lists three obstacles to people with severe mental illness receiving treatment: (1) the stigma surrounding mental illness, (2) unfair treatment limitations and financial requirements placed on mental health benefits in private health insurance and (3) the fragmented mental health service delivery system.

According to Friends Hospital in Philadelphia, during any one-year period, more than 22 percent of Americans suffer from a mental disorder. As many as one in five Americans will suffer at least one episode of major depression in their lifetime. Two million Americans suffer from schizophrenic disorders, and 300,000 new cases occur each year. Alcohol-related problems affect 15.4 million American adults and 4.6 million adolescents, and another 12.5 million suffer from drug abuse or dependence.

One in five Americans will suffer at least one episode of major depression in their lifetime. Two million Americans suffer from schizophrenic disorders.

President Bush has said: “Americans must understand and send this message: Mental disability is not a scandal—it is an illness. And like physical illness, it is treatable, especially when the treatment comes early.”

Unfortunately, treatment does not always come early. Community Mental Health Center, which handles most of the low-income cases in Indianapolis, says financial constraints can cause the illness to become worse.

As a free-lance reporter, I was assigned to write on this issue for an alternative weekly newspaper in Indianapolis. However, I became part of the story.

2/28/2005

The irony of the situation is not lost on me. Recently—the days have blurred—I handed in a story about the plight of lower-income mentally ill individuals in Indianapolis. Now I’m in the hospital with severe mental illness. I make less than $800 a month. I have no insurance because I have a severe mental illness.

Why would an insurance company refuse to cover someone?“The question of why is a fundamental question really of, Is this a business?” says Rob Whitlow at www.insurance-connection.net. “If so, then they are functioning as a business. They only remain in business by gaining more premium than they do paying claims.”

3/3/05

Much went wrong as Sarah, my therapist, tried to find me some help. Community North Hospital handles most of the low-income, uninsured cases from my county. However, they were on diversion, so I went to Wishard Hospital. Home to the only psychiatric emergency room in Indiana, Wishard was also on diversion, but it was the only place we could go. We figured I could get the assessment done there, and they could transfer me elsewhere.

The staff seemed swamped. Finally a social worker evaluated me. My symptoms were serious, but not as serious as the fact I’m uninsured, my Social Security Disability check is $244 a month, my employment isn’t steady and—the biggie—I live in the wrong county. He told me his shift was over and that someone else would finish the evaluation.

The next social worker explained that the psychiatrist would be with me in about 45 minutes. Rumor is that every psych ward in Indy is packed, possibly because it’s cold and the homeless have nowhere else to go.

She finally returned with the psychiatrist, and the two quickly decided to admit me. Tentative diagnosis is post-traumatic stress disorder and severe depression. The doc explained that due to severe demand for treatment, I’d have to stay in the psych ER until a bed became available.

I was there for three days.

eeds to address mental illness.

looked after me'

3/4/05, 8 a.m.

Everyone—even the other patients—thinks there's a reason (besides the obvious one) that I'm here. Some think it's because "you just need to rest." Some think it's to torpedo my credibility. Some think I'm here investigating, Nellie Bly style.

3/6/05, 6:35 p.m.

There is not enough staff here, and that puts us all in danger. A patient made a security breach, and it almost turned violent. There was not enough staff to watch us and deal with the situation—in fact, the guy assigned to watch me ordered me to stay put as he ran to help. Even one of the patients helped out by escorting the [patient] away from the staff.

It's not Wishard's fault. They get the sickest people in the state and have limited funding. Funny how the feds have enough money to help pay for a new [Colts] stadium but not enough to pay for health care. It's like a Dr. Betty Routledge said in one of my old pieces—"What are we as a community willing to pay to ensure there is an adequate safety net there?"

What can we do to fix the mental health-care system, which the President's New Freedom Commission Report describes as "fragmented and in disarray"? How can we help the mentally ill?

One way is to advocate for a change in insurance policies. "My heart goes out to anyone facing a mental health problem and trying to purchase individual health coverage," Whitlow says. "I see both sides. I understand the health insurance companies are like any other business, they must make a profit. It would be a greater crime to see a company take too many risks and go out of business. Where would that leave the policy holders?

"Option B is to require them to take on more risk, but does anyone want to pay more premium for health coverage?

"Option C makes sense to me. For high-risk individuals, the government should subsidize the insurance company that takes the most risk and has the lowest health premiums. Tax breaks and other money could go to help fund plans that help the individual marketplace. But where would we get that money? That is easy, we would get it from you and me, the everyday taxpayer. … The truth is, we Americans want the best health care in the world, we just don't want to pay for it."

Another way to help is by volunteering for a suicide hotline. According to the Executive Summary, suicide is "one of the most distressing and preventable consequences of undiagnosed, untreated or undertreated mental illness." According to the World Health Organization, suicide causes more deaths worldwide each year than homicide or war.

The people most likely to fall through the cracks are those without a strong family system. Jewell says: "If the person has no family willing to be responsible for them, they will inevitably descend to the lowest income groups, if they are able to remain employed. If their illness precludes employment—their prospects are much bleaker. It is estimated that up to 30 percent of the homeless population may have severe mental illness. Additionally, recent statistics show that upward of 16 percent of our prison population consists of individuals with severe mental illness, and some of this group also has family that cares. These numbers increase when you examine the number of [people] with a 'dual diagnosis,' which means people who have an addiction disorder and severe mental illness."

According to the New Freedom Commission's Interim Report to the President, several unmet needs and barriers to care include fragmentation and gaps in care for children, fragmentation and gaps in care for adults with serious mental illness, high unemployment and disability for people with serious mental illness, lack of care for older adults with mental illness and lack of national priority for mental health and suicide prevention.

According to the World Health Organization, suicide causes more deaths worldwide each year than homicide or war.

We should educate ourselves on this subject in order to minister to a group often marginalized and overlooked. In doing so, we help "the least of these," Christ's brothers.

Becky Oberg attends First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

God is my spiritual cane

by Carole Ricketts Walker

O Lord, all my longing is known to you; my sighing is not hidden from you.—Psalm 38:9

Being diagnosed with Mixed Connective Tissue Disease (MCTD), a type of Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lupus, has brought me closer to our Creator and Sustainer. When one battles a chronic illness, especially when it comes on so quickly, it can become a crisis of faith. People have been plagued for ages with the question, Why is there suffering in the world? While I also ask this and have my own bad days, overall this journey has brought me into a deeper understanding about God's abounding love, grace and sustaining power.

My mother and I have been blessed to be a part of First Mennonite Church in Indianapolis for more than eight years. Members there have extended God's hand to us repeatedly in our times of need. Twice the pastor-elder team has come out to our house and held a healing service, based on James 5:13-16.

At first, this idea was foreign to me. I had questions about the service itself—more technical than spiritual. But I was moved by their faith. This was not just a passage these believers read and walked away from; they believed it and took it as a command to do this for others.

The second time they came to our house, we invited my grandparents to come. As I sat with tears running down my face, I felt overwhelmed by love. Here were those I loved—my family, pastor and elders—laying their hands on me, praying earnestly to a God who loved me more than I will ever fathom, so that I could be healed. I had asked God to walk on this journey with me. I didn't want to walk it alone; I needed someone to help me. In the time of prayer and petition, I was at peace. I heard God say: "Of course I will walk with you. We will do this together." Since then, through ups and downs, I have never felt that God has abandoned me. He celebrates with me during our victories and cries with me during our setbacks.

Through ups and downs, I have never felt that God has abandoned me. He celebrates with me during our victories and cries with me during our setbacks.

I have a prayer and envisioning exercise I do when I have a particularly bad night. This idea came because I was alone a lot at school. My family lives in Indianapolis, more than three hours away from the dorms where I lived alone. At the beginning of this last school year, I lay in bed, crying in pain. I wanted to cry out to God to do something and ask, Where are you? I realized God was there in the room, grieving with me.

Our God is not cold or distant, unaffected by our suffering. Didn't Jesus weep when Lazarus died? Wasn't Jesus moved with pity to heal many around him during his ministry? Our God feels deeply.

I got up from bed, pulled my desk chair next to my bed and climbed back under the covers. I asked God to sit in that chair during the night, like a caring Mother or diligent nurse. I asked God to attend to my wounds like a nurse. A peace I cannot describe descended on me. I slept soundly. When I woke for a moment, I envisioned God in that chair staying up all night, attending to me in my hour of need. Since then, when I hurt the most, I do this exercise and place myself in God's nursing hands.

Chronic illness and dependence on God

I was diagnosed with MCTD 17 months ago. That may not seem like a long time, but it seems like an eternity. The symptoms and suffering went on a few years before then; I avoided going to the doctor. My rheumatologist is from my home congregation, is part of the pastor-elder team and was present at both healing services. It has been a blessing to work with her as a friend and church family member. It has also been a struggle.

Since my diagnosis, we are still no closer to finding an effective drug. I have been through adverse side effects, drug interactions and drugs that performed less than desired. Sometimes I have been severely limited in my activity. I have been youth pastor at Topeka (Ind.) Mennonite Church for four years, and as I work with the junior and senior high school students, I miss being able to run around and play silly games. I have to watch from the side or only run for a limited time.

Sometimes my joints are swollen and I find it harder to get around, especially early in the morning and late at night. I have to pull out the cane, which is my last resort. I do not want people to see me walking with a cane. The reasons are wrapped up in my pride. I don't want to be a 21-year-old student, supposedly in the prime of life, walking around with a cane. I have to put aside my pride and use the cane.

I've learned that no one treats me differently. The cane is a visible reminder of my dependence on God. We all want to be able to say that we have everything under control. But actually we are utterly depended on God. I can't walk with my cane and wear my Superwoman cape. To wear the cape, however invisible to others, is to be able to say, I am in control of my life, everything is fine. But that is a lie. To carry the cane is to take off the cape and say, I need help; I'm not in control. I can't do it all. With every step I've had to remind myself to relinquish control and become more dependent on God. God will carry me and take care of me. God is my spiritual cane.

I have also learned that my suffering does not have to be nonproductive. My suffering does not have to end but can be transformed to help others. Having MCTD has made me more sensitive to others in need. It has made me experience the healing stories of Jesus in greater depth.

As I experience my challenges and learn more about how God heals miraculously, I have put together a prayer book. These prayers were born out of my inability to find prayers that spoke to me in my time of pain. Perhaps one day *Searching for Shalom: Prayers for the Chronically Ill* will be published. I can only pray that others will find comfort and learn to turn to God in their pain instead of turning away from him. One of my prayers is a daily one for me; one I believe in and hope to strive for in my life:

Friend Jesus,
You have known immeasurable suffering.
My constant pain reminds me that many in this world are crying out for help as well.
Let me not be deaf to their cries.
Empower me to help others.
And at the times when I feel the least capable, open the doors that will release your floodgate of grace, love and mercy. Amen.

It is scary to think about what kind of condition my body may be in 20, 30 or 40 years from now. It is something I have to give over to God. I give God the fear, doubts and at times the anger of what may be as I grow older. But as the years go by and I continue this journey, I know one thing: God loves me more than I ever will know. God will never leave me on this journey. He will continue to walk with me, celebrating and rejoicing together, lamenting together and, above all, living life together. With that assurance, I know I can handle anything that comes our way.

Carole Ricketts Walker graduated last month from Goshen (Ind.) College in youth ministry. She will attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., this fall. She works at Topeka (Ind.) Mennonite Church with the junior and senior high school youth.

I have also learned that my suffering does not have to be nonproductive. My suffering does not have to end but can be transformed to help others.

Mennonite
Church
USA

Down wi
mud pit
We
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Freed
PRAYING for
PEACE
MOURNING the VIOLENC

Pastoral intern Jason Gerlach (left) and co-pastor Ray Hurst prepare to baptize Nathan Derstine during a Sunday morning service at a member's home.

Above: First- through fifth-grade children of the congregation lead a worship service with a lively musical, "Moses and the Freedom Fanatics."

Photos courtesy Jim Bishop

Laura Quass Ferdinand and daughter Bessie-Marie light a prayer candle. Confession, intercessory prayer and "sharing time" are regular parts of Community's worship.

Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., started the fall of 1972 in the former Chicago Avenue Mennonite Church that was vacated when that congregation built a new facility on the south side of town and became Harrisonburg Mennonite Church. From its modest beginnings, a core group emerged with a twofold vision: to develop an Anabaptist-Mennonite presence with an outreach to its geographic community and a covenant relationship in the congregation. Over the years, the church has sent leaders to other pastoral roles; some have served with Mennonite Mission Network, Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions and other agencies. The church encourages broad involvement, including children, and has a pastoral team model. Ray N. Hurst and Meg Wightman are co-pastors. The church provides facilities for several programs that serve the broader community, including the inter-denominational Patchwork Pantry food ministry, New Bridges immigrant transition center and the Community Child Center program. While attendance averages 250-275, at a membership commitment service each fall people share verbal and written faith statements and sign the roll as members or associate members for another year.—*Jim Bishop*

Glenda Leonard (left) and Sue Swartz catch up following a worship service.

A consensus-building exercise culminates with releasing balloons.

Relating across races and cultures

Kenyetta Twine is director of Mennonite Church USA Executive Board Office of Intercultural Relations.

American society has forced assimilation. Unfortunately this also has infiltrated the church. This "melting pot" model should not be present in the body of Christ. We are to respect each race and ethnicity and their cultures.

Within Mennonite Church USA we have a dominant group, so we must affirm and value the various identities, cultures and languages of racial/ethnic people. We should continuously evaluate how the various parts of our church relate across races and cultures and how we are doing at becoming an antiracist church. Mennonite Church USA is to be one body in which all its members, regardless of race and ethnicity, have equal access to and opportunity of rights, power, privileges and resources.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines "assimilate" as "to absorb (immigrants or a culturally distinct group) into the prevailing culture." With assimilation the group often loses its identity, culture and language and becomes similar to the dominant group. "One body" has sometimes meant everyone assimilates to the dominant group. Instead it should mean we each bring our identity, culture and language that has different parts that make up our race/ethnicity, and we function together, maintaining our distinct racial/ethnic identities. We should reject any notions that one racial group is the standard.

Mennonite Church USA seeks to be a missional church in which all the parts are healthy and help fulfill God's call. 1 Corinthians 12:18-27 says that God placed each of us in the body with particular gifts to use for his will. God created us as interdependent parts to function in harmony. We are to build up and nourish the whole body (which means nourishing each member) so that it is strong.

Racial/ethnic people need to value both strong identities and relating to the other members in the body. A person's identity, culture and language is often developed by maintaining relationships with others of the same racial/ethnic group, particularly here in the United States, where racism continues. Racial/ethnic people also are encouraged to maintain strong relationships with other members in the body. The body suffers when a group does not share its gifts with other members. Intercultural Relations works to connect racial/ethnic members with the body and help all parts understand Mennonite Church USA's purpose. We promote the development of relationships among racial/ethnic people and among congregations and individuals from different racial backgrounds.

As part of the body, the following commitments will help us relate to one another and work together to address racism and bring people together:

- Improve communications with racial/ethnic congregations.
- Develop innovative means of communicating.
- Make contextualization and translating documents and other communications a priority.
- Relate to racial/ethnic congregations as equal members of Mennonite Church USA.
- Intentionally include Racial/Ethnic people in all levels of decision making and visioning.
- Equip all parts of the church to serve in churchwide roles.
- Recognize that God speaks to all people groups and function accordingly.
- Operate from a multiracial/multicultural perspective and develop systems accessible to all racial/ethnic people within Mennonite Church USA.
- Antiracism training for all parts of Mennonite Church USA is an essential step in becoming an antiracist church.
- Learn how to be racially sensitive.
- Implement the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) in our relationships with those within our racial/ethnic group and those in other racial/ethnic groups and in all areas of church life.
- Recognize that racial/ethnic people are not homogenous and respect and value our uniqueness and diverse gifts.
- Consult with racial/ethnic people in developing resources that are culturally relevant and in assisting racial/ethnic congregations.
- Recognize that different ministry approaches are needed in different cultures.
- Empower these different approaches and do not seek to have congregations conform to the dominant group's ministry approaches. TM

The term "racial/ethnic people" is used to refer to African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Native Americans (people that have been underrepresented and victims of the system of racism). This term is not meant to describe the people referred to or suggest that people are all the same but that a term is needed as we seek to become an antiracist church to distinguish between the dominant group and those that have been underrepresented and excluded.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Shouting the secrets of the kingdom**—Bert Newton
- **Biblical storytelling**—Dan Longnecker

Counselors train for a possible U.S. draft

Selective Service has two systems; counselors must master intricacies of both.

Jeff Selzer, youth pastor at Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb., is faced with an old yet new dilemma regarding peace issues. How much should he spend time preparing young people to deal with issues regarding peacemaking—including a possible draft? These are questions he asked when attending an April 23-24 workshop on draft counseling in Aurora, Neb.

Selzer, who serves at the congregation belonging to Central Plains Mennonite Conference, knows his responsibilities toward the youth extend far beyond teaching pacifism. At the same time, he also knew that the possibility of a military draft loomed large in the immediate future of his church's young men and women.

"Do we care about other people's lives—economics, social justice—or are we only a people of peace when there's a war?" he says. "Sometimes I wonder whether we've made conscientious objection a singular issue of being a 'peaceable people.'"

Selzer was one of about 20 participants, mostly from Nebraska peace groups and traditional peace churches, who attended the eight-hour workshop. Their reasons for learning about draft counseling were diverse: a Korean War veteran and high school teacher who wanted to know what he's talking about when students ask him about the draft, a high school senior who thought it would come in handy in college, a lawyer who works as a public defender, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, a college English professor, a peace activist/musician, other activists and several mothers of draft-age sons.

Their first question—Will there be a draft?—was one of the easiest questions for the workshop leader, J.E. McNeil, director of Center on Conscience and War.

"I don't know," McNeil said. "Every time we talk publicly about the draft, it becomes more palatable."

Although she stressed that resumption of the draft is not imminent, McNeil welcomed the renewed interest in draft counseling sparked by recent international developments.

"Before Sept. 11," McNeil said, "no one asked about learning to be a draft counselor. Afterward, we did maybe two trainings until the middle of 2002, when it became clear that we were going to invade Iraq. Now we do about two to three draft-counselor trainings a month."

McNeil welcomes this increased interest because if a draft is reinstated, every community in the nation will have a sudden and immense need for good draft counselors. McNeil, an attorney and one of the nation's foremost authorities on the draft, said Selzer and other draft counselors will have to be good listeners, ask the right questions and pay attention to detail.

"They have to be imaginative enough to hear from many different voices ... so that they can match the individual with the right set of rules and advice," McNeil said.

Perhaps a draft counselor's greatest challenge springs from the fact that Selective Service has two different systems. One, designed to respond to national emergencies, would send thousands of draftees to training camps in less than two weeks after the President requests and Congress grants authorization for a draft.

The other system allows for more time between issuance of the induction notice and the date a draftee begins training.

Each system has its own set of procedures and timelines for handling postponements and reclassification appeals. Circumstances under which a draft might be started could determine which system is used. Selzer and other counselors must master the intricacies of both. And in either case, the response time for submitting requests for deferments, postponements and reclassifications is only a matter of days, so they must have all the forms at their fingertips.

Selzer says he felt overwhelmed by everything draft counselors need to know but appreciated McNeil describing the processes of both draft systems. He also praises the effort McNeil has made in cultivating relationships with Selective Service officials.

"Too often we undermine our Christian witness to others with whom we don't agree with by reducing them to a label: the enemy," Selzer said. "J.E.'s positive characterization of those working in the Selective Service ... makes her witness that much more persuasive."—*Duane Johnson, a freelance writer for Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Every time we talk publicly about the draft, it becomes more palatable.
—J.E.McNeil

How to prepare for a draft

No one knows whether a U.S. military draft will be reinstated in the near future. But J.E. McNeil, director of the Center on Conscience & War, suggests several things that traditional peace churches, peace groups and interested individuals can do to lay the groundwork for responding to a draft:

- **Have a trained draft counselor in your community.**
- **Help conscientious objectors among the draft-age members of your church or faith community create CO files. Don't forget young women.**
- **Beginning with Conscientious Objector Day each May 16, maintain continuous contact with your members of Congress about what COs believe and will and won't do. This helps ensure that the law will treat COs fairly. See www.centeronconscience.org.**
- **Reach out to other faith traditions that may not have such a strong history of conscientious objection to make them aware of the resources available.**
- **Apply, or help someone else apply for appointment to the local draft board.—*Duane Johnson***

Eastern District planting church in N.H.

New congregation sprouts from replant of New Eden Fellowship in eastern Pa.

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Photo provided

When Derek and Trish Hubley moved to Dover, N.H. (above), they noticed a need for a Mennonite church.

Five years ago, the 175-year-old New Eden congregation in Schwenksville, Pa., was faltering. The number of attendees had dwindled to around 35. Weakened in numbers and leadership, they wondered if the church had a future. Willing to try anything and with a vision for God doing a new work, New Eden Fellowship decided to replant the church.

Using the same space, they brainstormed ideas to help them be more involved in the community. Since the implementation of a kids club and supper program, a mother's group, clothing room, food bank and Alcoholics Anonymous, the congregation now has just over 100 covenanted attendees. Having reached its five-year anniversary, they are committed to planting a new church in Dover, N.H.

"Churches go through a life cycle and traditionally have not been replacing themselves fast enough to keep up with the population," says New Eden pastor Don Fry. "We want to move forward rather than just staying the same, so we need a vision for planting churches."

Like a strawberry plant, "a normal, healthy church sends out runners, and they take root," says Warren Tyson, Eastern District Mennonite Conference minister. Derek and Trish Hubley inadvertently became the first runners when they moved from north of Philadelphia's urban sprawl to New England for his work. Seeing a need for a Mennonite church, they called for leadership to join them.

"As time went on there were no church planters to be found, and I was asked to do it," says Peter Engelman, who was serving as outreach coordinator at New Eden.

Having participated in YES (Youth Evangelism Service) and STAT (Summer Training Action Teams) through Eastern Mennonite Missions in 2000 and 2001, Engelman has been toying with the idea of serving in some sort of ministry full-time.

"God had taught me about discipleship, and that's what allowed me to be open to doing church planting," he says.

Engelman was licensed by the conference and, along with worship leader Brian Milton, began preliminary work in Dover in January.

While the initial plant stems from New Eden, Dan Graber, chair of the Eastern District's mission committee, hopes the congregation won't be growing it alone. Other congregations have been invited to take ownership in the project, which Graber believes will strengthen the whole conference. Graber also cites the resources available through the conference mission committee—people with experience in a variety of missions, from prison ministry to business to community development.

According to Karl McKinney, minister of church planting for Mennonite Mission Network, having an entire conference behind such a project provides the resources and accountability a denominational plant needs. McKinney and Fry will coach and give counsel to the developing program.

"Our intent would be to provide a strong base of conference and denominational support nurturing the vision and growing the leader as well as the church plant," Tyson says. To that end, Eastern District Conference's ministerial leadership committee will find a mentor for Engelman, and Tyson and Graber will keep in contact with the church plant on a regular basis.

"We're willing to encourage him to take risks," says Tyson. "It's not the end of the world if things don't work out the way he envisioned."

As other congregations consider how they might become involved, New Eden continues its support for Engelman and his team. This summer the middle-school youth from New Eden will head to Dover for a mission trip, and joining the team next winter is member Jayson Hillegas.

"That's only because God said, 'I want you there,' " Hillegas says. "At first I said I didn't want any part of it, and I wasn't moving north—it's way too cold up there."

Hillegas had a secure job in information technology and was saving to buy a house. But late last fall, as he continued to pray about it, he felt God's nudging.

"Pete isn't visioning a normal church setting, and I'd like to see that take off and be able to reach a lot of people in this area," Hillegas says.—*Bethany Keener of Mennonite Mission Network News Service*

Decade of conflict transformation at EMU

Center for Justice and Peacebuilding is new name of 10-year-old program.

Some 400 people gathered June 3-5 at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., to celebrate 10 years of a program that has grown way beyond expectations.

EMU launched the conflict transformation program in 1994 with two American students, two professors, a box of file folders and an administrative staff member. Ten years later, it has seen more than 2,500 people from 83 countries take one or more of its courses. The June 3-5 celebration was a reflection on the past decade, recognition of its founders and supporters, and worship and music with a peace and reconciliation theme.

During a celebration dinner June 4, the program officially changed names from Conflict Transformation Program (CTP) to the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP).

Ruth H. Zimmerman, CJP co-director, said the change was made "because we've developed rapidly into a multipronged program, and this name better reflects who we are.

"The term, 'conflict transformation' often raised more questions than it answered," Zimmerman said. "But most people readily understand peace and justice, and peacebuilding is an active process at the heart of our program."

Zimmerman said the incredible growth of what is now CJP presents a problem.

"It's difficult to keep growing," she said, "given our limited current office and classroom space, coupled to the pressing need to increase scholarships for worthy students with limited financial resources."

At a June 5 brunch, a number of longtime donors to the program heard expressions of appreciation from current CJP students from eight countries who have received financial assistance.

Summer Peacebuilding Institute student Sara Kauffman Brown, born and raised in South Africa and currently working in a mental health program with traumatized people in Sierra Leone, said the Summer Peacebuilding Program "brings people from around the world together in an intense experience in community. We look after each other and leave with a feeling of support for our work."

CJP benefactors Herb and Sarah Bucher Myers, Mount Joy, Pa., said they support the program because it is making a difference in applying Anabaptist principles to build a better world.

"As we hear how students in the program are connecting with hurting people, we feel it is a privilege to support this effort," Myers said.

The couple's daughter, Janelle Myers Benner, is a CJP administrative assistant.

"I'm committed to this program that helps persons from other countries receive training to return to their homelands or other places and work in peace initiatives," said Dwight Hartman of Harrisonburg.

Jim Bishop

EMU students (left to right) Ferdinand Waweka Djayerombe from the Congo, Laura A. Schildt from the United States and Hind Ghorayeb from Lebanon wrote a song for the 10th anniversary of the Conflict Transformation Program

EMU President Loren E. Swartzendruber reflected on the center's mission in the closing session June 5 at Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

"It may seem crystal clear to us that to be in authentic relationship with Christ requires us to be reconcilers," Swartzendruber said. But it is painfully clear that such a passion is a minority worldview."

The service included a song written and sung by three students in the Master of Arts in peacebuilding program (see photo).—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

Attention pastors

Special mailing of *The Mennonite's* July 26 Charlotte 2005 issue

Everyone in your congregation can read about Charlotte 2005 and what happened there even if they don't already receive *The Mennonite*. We are printing extra copies of this special edition so that all can have the opportunity to become more informed.

Please contact Rebecca Helmuth at 800-790-2498 before June 30 to place your order for extra copies. Your order will be sent in bulk at $2.00 per copy ($3.00 Cdn.). Payment must be received by July 4. No invoice will be issued at this low cost.

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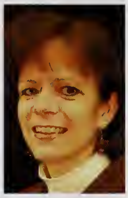
Mennonites join in world mission event

Boat brings wooden cross made from trees cut down for Israel's separation wall.

We cannot tackle the world's issues by ourselves. —Janet Plenert



Plenert

Healing and reconciliation were at the center of the 13th World Council of Churches (WCC) Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, held May 9-16 in Athens, Greece.

Janet Plenert, from Winnipeg, was a delegate representing the Global Mission Fellowship of Anabaptist-related Churches. Plenert is a member of the GMF planning committee, which is facilitated by Mennonite World Conference.

She is also director of international ministries and facilitator for partnerships in Latin America for Mennonite Church Canada Witness, the mission arm of the national church.

"Anabaptists are small but significant fish swimming in an ecumenical ocean," says Plenert. "Never have I been called on so often to explain our church history, our global church growth, what it means to be a historic peace church or where our name comes from."

The Greek Orthodox church hosted this conference at the summer retreat center for the Greek army, a delightfully ironic twist for historic peace church delegates. A symbolic gift for delegates arrived in Athens by boat. The crowd, gathered at the dock, watched the unloading of a five-meter wooden cross, then joined a procession to the worship center. The cross was fashioned from thousands of olive wood tiles made from trees cut down in Bethlehem to make room for the illegal separation wall.

"It was a moving and generous act of unity yet also of recognition that we have so far to go in our attempts to work together," says Plenert.

Integral to the focus on mission and evangelism were stories of church ministries, spiritual and physical healing, large-scale reconciliation efforts in South Africa and personal testimonies.

Along with a South African missiologist and a Palestinian human rights activist, Plenert, representing historic peace churches, participated in a panel to discuss the ambiguous relationship between mission and violence. The panel was part of a plenary session hosted by World Council of Church's "Decade to Overcome Violence," an initiative first suggested by Fernando Enns, a German Mennonite professor in ecumenism. Swiss Mennonite Hansuli Gerber now serves as staff for the initiative.

"Mennonites have much to offer the ecumenical movement in promoting a biblical interpretation that leads to a witness of Jesus that both disavows violence and forms deliberate peace-building communities," says Plenert. "We have a profound history and significant understanding of peace that we sometimes take for granted."

Plenert was also able to articulate an understanding of community that is less hierarchical and attempts to decentralize power and thus minimize abuse of power as beliefs and practices of the faith group she represents.

The 650 participants from more than 100 countries and diverse faith groups included members of the WCC and nonmembers such as Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches and networks.

Although delegates shared three meals with each other every day, they were not all able to sit together at the Lord's Table, since some of the faith groups share Communion only among their own members. This painful reality cast a shadow over the otherwise inclusive nature of the conference.

Delegates approached discussion of the task of mission and evangelism with a great sense of humility, Plenert says. The pain and violence of the past, the church's role in genocide and other violent historical mission efforts were named and lamented.

The divided situation in the Holy Land and the HIV/AIDS pandemic were also acknowledged.

"It was refreshing to be a part of a gathering representing a large portion of the world's Christians," says Plenert, "and to be able to talk about things like peace, nonviolence and reconciliation. … We cannot tackle the world's issues by ourselves."

—Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference News Service

Correction: Mennonite Publishing Network's long-term debt on Jan. 31 was $3,496,420, not $2,770,479 as reported in a May 3 article.

A celebration of contemporary Mennonite faith and culture through acoustic music and song.
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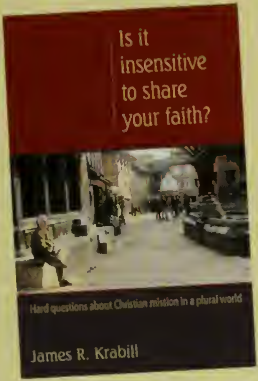
Is it insensitive to share your faith?
Hard questions about Christian mission in a plural world
James R. Krabill

Is It Insensitive to Share Your Faith?
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by James R. Krabill

Krabill walks right into discussions often considered off limits. Are Christians hopelessly narrow and uninformed? Why do they act as though only they are right and everyone else isn't? Why would Jesus be someone to follow today? And what difference could that make?

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Krabill's very readable style and honest manner make this book accessible to young adults and other critical thinkers. $9.99, paperback

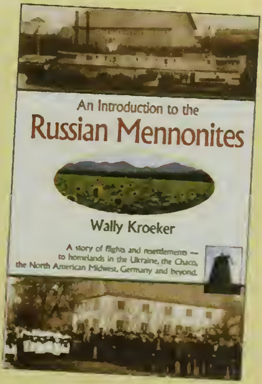
An Introduction to the Russian Mennonites
by Wally Kroeker

Mennonites in Russia? Kroeker tells it all with vibrancy—the overview and the memorable details.

Unbelievable prosperity for some; unspeakable terror for many; church tensions; struggles between the landed and the landless; exquisite clockmaking, storytelling, music-making, and food.

Himself a Russian Mennonite, Kroeker heads into the history, but also the later movements of these people to the U.S. and Canada. Are they at all distinctive today? What has drawn some to the cities and professions, and others to the rural prairies? What about those in Europe and those still in the former Soviet Union?

Includes dozens of historic and contemporary photographs. Kroeker is editor of *The Marketplace*. $7.95, paperback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CALENDAR

Christmas Candlelight Tours, Dec. 2 and 3, **Hans Herr House and Museum**, Willow Street, Lancaster County. Call 717-464-4438 or visit www.hansherr.org.

Heritage Day, Aug. 6, **Hans Herr House and Museum**, Willow Street, Lancaster County. Call 717-464-4438 or visit www.hansherr.org.

"Now Speak with Boldness", July 7, Charlotte, N.C. One-day, independently sponsored event at which featured speakers Ingrid Rimland Zundel, Michael A. Hoffman II and Bruce Leichty will give presentations on the U.S. political kidnapping and Canadian show trial of Ernst Zundel; on Talmudic racism and on Freemasonty. Event is open to all. More information is available at www.goodinformation.org.

Snitz Fest, Oct. 1, **Hans Herr House and Museum**, Willow Street, Lancaster County. Call 717-464-4438 or visit www.hansherr.org.

Values-Based Leadership Program, two-session event, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. First session "Leading from the Inside" takes place Sept. 19-21, 2005. Second session, "Leading and Empowering Others," is scheduled for Feb. 15-17, 2006. Sponsored by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, MHS Alliance, MMA and Schmucker Training and Consulting. For more information call 800-839-1021 or 724-423-2056, email IAL@Laurelville.org or visit the Web site www.laurelville.org/IAL.

WORKERS

Brodnicki, John, was licensed toward ordination June 1 to serve Mennonite Bible Fellowship, Morris, Pa.

Derstine, Lorene, was ordained May 15 as chaplain to serve Dock Woods Community, Lansdale, Pa.

Dugan, Joseph, was licensed June 1 as chaplain at Philadephia Mennonite High School.

Rheinheimer, Ben, was ordained May 15 as youth pastor at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bartell, Carley Sue, May 27, to Nathan and Becky Esau Bartell, Newton, Kan.

Book, Kyle Matthew, May 21, to Ted and Gina Hollinger Book, Leola, Pa.

Brezovec, Devon Michael, May 17, to Anthony and Rebecca Moore Brezovec, Johnstown, Pa.

Buller, Avrom Jacob, April 8, to Tom and Karla Yoder Buller, Hesston, Kan.

Burkholder, Anna Friesen, March 25, to Guy and Emily Friesen Burkholder, Philadelphia.

Carpenter, Charity Rose, received for adoption May 16 by Cody and Sara Schulz Carpenter, Anchorage, Alaska.

Carpenter, Teyah Dawn, received for adoption May 16 by Cody and Sara Schulz Carpenter, Anchorage, Alaska.

Copeland, Jackson Ross, April 27, to Jame and Chandra Copeland, Newton, Kan.

Crawford, Shelton James, May 9, to Dan and Lori Pretzer Crawford, Beatrice, Neb.

Esbenshade, Davin Jacob, April 17, to Wade and Jennifer Keith Esbenshade, New Holland, Pa.

Estep, Logan Piper, May 6, to Brent and Kirsten Miller Estep, Boswell, Pa.

Friesen, Ryley Dakota, April 23, to Matthew and Betty Dunn Friesen, Frederick, Colo.

Gingerich, Anica Graice, May 18, to Levi and Kelly Keunnen Gingerich, Lafayette, Ind.

Hunsberger, Kyan, April 8, to Kyle and Tina Jantzi Hunsberger, St. Louis.

Hurst, Claire Longacre, May 19, to Kevin and Cara Longacre Hurst.

Imchen, Tajunginla Kate and Sentinaro Isabella (twins), May 6, to Toshi and Beth Rice Imchen, East Earl, Pa.

Kaufman Shenk, Maia Grace, May 16, to Tim Shenk and Christine Kaufman, Lancaster, Pa.

Kolb, Jordan Marie, May 14, to Marcus and Carol Snyder Kolb, Phoenixville, Pa.

Mast, Micah Emmanuel, May 18, to Marcelo and Melissa Allebach Mast, Lansdale, Pa.

Maurer, Sydney Grace, May 17, to Bill and Keri Froese Maurer, Inman, Kan.

Maust, Alex Michael, May 24, to Weldon and Rebecca Shelley Maust, Harrisonburg, Va.

Peters, August Luke, May 3, to Luke and Chasie Young Peters, Aurora, Neb.

Reschly, Brock Samuel, April 5, to Sam and Jeanna Baus Reschly, Goshen, Ind.

Riedel, Lilly Anna, April 14, to Glen and Tammy Thiessen Riedel, Lincoln, Neb.

Shoemaker, Elizabeth Grace, May 25, to Joe and Angie Harshbarger Shoemaker, Elkhart, Ind.

Stutzman, Rianna Hope, Nov. 29, 2004, to Les and Barbara Detweiler Stutzman, Goshen, Ind.

Tellado, McAllister Noll, May 17, to Aurelio and Tema Gerber Tellado, Souderton, Pa.

Truslow, Alston Ray and Brooke Elizabeth (twins), May 8, to Ricky "Bo" and Stacy Smallwood Truslow, Verona, Va.

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Waltner, Treyton Alexander, May 4, to Katie Waltner, Freeman, S.D.

MARRIAGES

Alfrey/Geiser: Jared Alfrey, Columbus, Ohio, and Cheryl Geiser, Apple Creek, Ohio, April 23 at Wolf Creek Church of God, Columbus.

Caffery/White: Dennis Caffery, Hopedale, Ill., and Diane White, Morton, Ill., March 5 at United Methodist Church, Morton.

Delp/Denlinger: Sharon Delp, Manheim, Pa., and Marc Denlinger, Strasburg, Pa., May 14 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Kramer/Shephard: Charles Kramer, Freeman, S.D., and Rebekah Shephard, Algona, Iowa, April 30 at Faith Assembly of God, Algona.

DEATHS

Augspurger, Merle J., 90, Chenoa, Ill., died May 21 of heart failure. Spouse: Mary Porzelius Augspurger. Parents: Emanuel and Emma Lehmann Augspurger. Children: Jeff, Brad; 10 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 26 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Beck, Howard H., 82, Hesston, Kan., died May 21. Spouse: Anna Ruth Weaver Beck. Parents: Thad and Henrietta (Etta) McFarlane Beck. Children: Duane, Marlene Yoder; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 25 at Hesston Mennonite Church.

Bender, Nancy Shank, Lancaster, Pa., died May 31 of cancer. Spouse: Jon Scott Bender. Parents: Samuel S. and Kathryn Shank. Children: Courtney, Madeline, Sena Larard; two grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 in Broadway, Va.

Bergey, Ruth R., 76, Hatfield, Pa., died May 11. Spouse: Horace S. Bergey. Parents: Earl and Katie Nyce Clemens. Children: Elaine Derstine, Donald, Kenneth, Marlin, Karen, Lowell; 16 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at Towamencin Mennonite Church, Kulpsville, Pa.

Brandenberry, Leona Yoder, 89, Middlebury, Ind., died April 28. Spouse: John R. Brandenberry. Parents: Samuel A. and Nora Stutzman Yoder. Children: Julia Weaver, J. Robert, Jacqueline Wilson; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

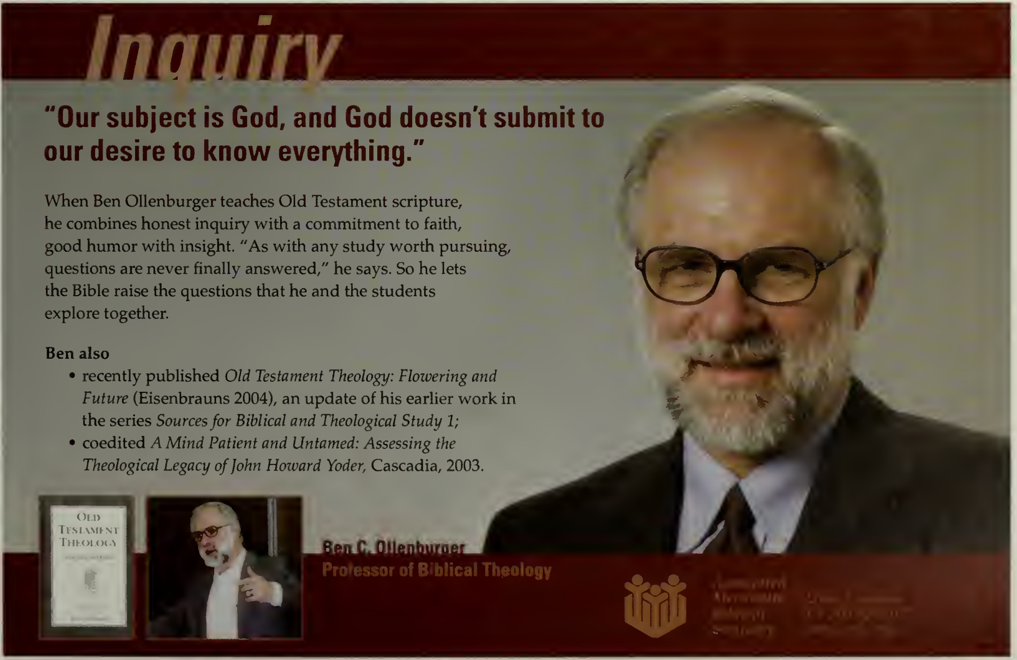
Brandt, Grace Ewert, 71, Hillsboro, Kan., died May 13 of cancer. Spouse: Raymond Brandt. Parents: David P. and Lydia Ewert. Children: Mike, Laurie Luken, Julie Brandt Anderson; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 17 at First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro.

Bucher, Myrtle Nolt, 90, Manheim, Pa., died May 21 of a massive stroke. Spouse: J. Chester Bucher. Parents: Harlan G. and Nettie Hess Nolt. Children: James C., Trilda J., Ruth Anne Torielli; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Memorial service: May 28 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Davidhizar, Anna Wenger, 91, Goshen, Ind., died Feb. 3. Spouse: (1st) Carl Metzler (deceased), (2nd) Roy Davidhizar. Parents: Noah and Susannah Loucks Wenger. Children: Doris Smeltzer, Genevive Hershey, Mary Lambright, Marilyn Miller, Norma Mast, Carl; 16 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Feb. 7 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Davidhizar, Roy, 86, Wakarusa, Ind., died May 11. Spouse: Anna Wenger Davidhizar (deceased). Parents: Calvin and Lizzie Culp Davidhizar. Children: Marilyn Miller, Norma Mast; step-children Doris Smeltzer, Genevive Hershey, Carl Metzler; 16 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 14 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Denlinger, Lloyd B., 91, Lancaster, Pa., died May 11. Spouse: Elizabeth H. Denlinger (deceased). Parents: Watler R. and Anna E. Brackbill Denlinger. Children: Dr. Robert H., Verna M. Groff (deceased); six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 15 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.



Inquiry

"Our subject is God, and God doesn't submit to our desire to know everything."

When Ben Ollenburger teaches Old Testament scripture, he combines honest inquiry with a commitment to faith, good humor with insight. "As with any study worth pursuing, questions are never finally answered," he says. So he lets the Bible raise the questions that he and the students explore together.

Ben also

- recently published *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future* (Eisenbrauns 2004), an update of his earlier work in the series *Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 1;*
- coedited *A Mind Patient and Untamed: Assessing the Theological Legacy of John Howard Yoder,* Cascadia, 2003.

Ben C. Ollenburger
Professor of Biblical Theology

Doerksen, Mary Ann Stucky, 84, Newton, Kan., died April 14. Spouse: Menno Doerksen (deceased). Parents: Gideon and Emilie Goering Stucky. Children: Donna Regier, Linda Linenberger, Marie Schmidt, Michael; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 23 at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton.

Goerzen, Alvin, 82, Goessel, Kan., died March 19. Spouse: Martha Friesen Goerzen (deceased). Parents: Jake and Sarah Schroeder Goerzen. Children: Eileen Schmidt, Ronald, Leslie, Beth Regher; five grandchildren. Funeral: March 23 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Graber, Oma Mae Westerman, 91, Moundridge, Kan., died May 23. Spouse: Clarence J. Graber (deceased). Parents: Homer A. and Rosa Schowalter Westerman. Child: Clark. Funeral: May 25 at First Mennonite Church of Christian, Moundridge.

Guntz, Anna Elizabeth, 91, Souderton, Pa., died Jan. 29. Parents: John B. and Elizabeth Bean Guntz. Funeral: Feb. 1 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Hershberger, Howard, 83, Berlin, Ohio, died June 4. Spouse: Norma Sommers Hershberger. Parents: Homer and Leola Hochstetler Hershberger. Children: Cheryl Yoder, Marsha Snyder, Bonnie Mellow; eight grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 7 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Himes, Mabel Geiser, 79, Kidron, Ohio, died May 23. Spouse: Harley Himes. Parents: William and Clara Geiser. Funeral: May 26 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Hofstetter, Willis J., 93, Kidron, Ohio, died May 17. Spouse: Della Hofstetter. Parents: David and Lavina Hofstetter. Children: Marlene, Howard, Starla Woodruff; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Hollinger, Bishop Aaron H., 80, New Holland, Pa., died May 13. Spouse: Marian Hershey Hollinger. Parents: John and Lottie Fellenbaum Hollinger. Children: Edwin, Colleen Keller, Carla Martin; six grandchildren. Funeral: May 17 at Weaverland Mennonite Church, East Earl, Pa.

Hunsberger, Waneta Shenk, 99, Phoenixville, Pa., died Jan. 4. Spouse: William Hunsberger (deceased). Parents: Elmer J. and Ina K. Coffman-Swartz Shenk. Children: Philip D., June Nafziger, Jane; 12 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Jan. 8 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City, Pa.

Jantz, Joseph, 96, Ritzville, Wa., died May 9. Spouse: (1st) Lillian Waltner Jantz (deceased), (2nd) Marie Stucky Jantz (deceased). Parents: John C. Jantz and Susie Kaufman. Funeral: May 14 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville.

Keeler, Martha Freed, 89, Harrisonburg, Va., died May 19. Spouse: Nathaniel W. Keeler (deceased). Parents: John and Annie Nyce Freed. Children: Anna Jane Heishman, Mary Ellen Miller, Richard, Mark; 10 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 22 in Harrisonburg, Va.

Kehr, Myrtle Wenger, 84, Goshen, Ind., died April 7 of congestive heart failure. Spouse; Orville Kehr (deceased). Parents: Charles and Goldie Weldy Wenger. Children: Nancy Harshberger, Ruthann Adams, David. Funeral: April 11 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kelsch, Michael, 83, Rolling Prairie, Ind., died May 25. Spouse: Anne Leubbers Kelsch. Children: Carol Oesterreich, Daniel; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at Hudson Lake Mennonite Church, New Carlisle, Ind.

Kolb, Norman G., 88, Ephrata, Pa., died Feb. 25. Spouse: Ellen Eck Kolb (deceased). Parents: John W. and Anna Kolb. Children: N. Jonathan, Rhoda J., Nathan J.; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City, Pa.

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Landis, Abram K., 97, Sellersville, Pa., died May 18. Spouse: Bessie Derstine Landis (deceased). Parents: Allen and Mattie Kulp Landis. Children: Geraldine Raber, Ruth Moyer, J. Lowell; three grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 23 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

McDonald, Esther Mae Andres, 77, Newton, Kan., died March 20. Spouse: J.C. McDonald (deceased). Parents: Peter C. and Anna Richert Andres. Funeral: March 24 at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Miller, Mildred Rediger, 87, Miller, S.D., died May 16 of pneumonia. Spouse: Wayne Miller (deceased). Parents: William and Mary Kremer Rediger. Children: May Nixon, Penny, Russell, Randall, Jeffrey; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at Miller Nazarene.

Miller, Vernon, 88, Sarasota, Fla., died April 22 of cancer. Spouse: Pauline Miller. Children: Philip, Wayne, Susan Nisley; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 28 at Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church, Chesapeake, Va.

Mishler, Florence Plank, 90, Middlebury, Ind., died May 7. Spouse: Franklin Mishler (deceased). Parents: Oscar and Alice Beck Plank. Children: Nancy Benton, Judy Kortie; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 11 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Redcay, Anna Mae Zoll, 77, Ephrata, Pa., died May 17. Spouse: Allen N. Redcay (deceased). Parents: Harvey B. and Lena Weber Zoll. Children: Gloria Boll, Marlin, Alvin; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 at Groffdale Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa.

Schlabach, Roy, 83, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died May 20. Spouse: Evelyn Hershberger Schlabach. Parents: Jacob and Mary Miller Schlabach. Children: Bruce, Sharon Yackey, Mary Stutzman; eight grandchildren. Funeral: May 23 at Walnut Creek Mennonite Church.

Shoemaker, Marion Grace, 91, Springs, Pa., died May 2. Parents: Ellis and Nettie Maust Shoemaker. Funeral: May 7 at Newman Funeral Home, Grantsville, Md.

Sommer, Aldine Oyer, 93, Chenoa, Ill., died May 10 of heart failure. Spouse: Willis J. Sommer (deceased). Parents: Emmanuel and Katie Rocke Oyer. Children: Irma Grusy, Kay Reimer, Willis J.; eight grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 14 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa.

Sterling, Donald, 74, Ft. Jennings, Ohio, died April 11 of cancer. Spouse: Patricia Morris Sterling. Parents: Delbert and Helen Dunifon Sterling. Children: Dana, Darlene Jones, Sabring Neiford; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: April 13 at Pike Mennonite Church, Elida, Ohio.

Streid, Hazel Augspurger, 92, Chenoa, Ill., died May 14 of heart failure. Spouse: Russell Streid (deceased). Parents: Emanuel and Emma Lehman Augspurger. Child: Gayle Boop. Funeral: May 17 at Duffy-Pils Memorial Home, Chenoa.

Voth, Marie Schmidt, 94, Goessel, Kan., died April 29. Spouse: Bernhard Voth (deceased). Parents: Jacob J. and Elizabeth Enns Schmidt. Children: Mary Lou Unrau, Lester; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 3 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Voth, Susan, 55, Lancaster, Pa., died May 11 of cancer. Parents: Arthur A. and Anna Mae Voth. Funeral: May 16 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Werner, Adeline, 88, Orrville, Ohio, died May 22. Spouse: (1st) Lyman Gerber (deceased), (2nd) Donald Werner (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Helen Zaugg. Child: Carol Gerber. Funeral: May 26 at Spidell Funeral Home, Mt. Eaton, Ohio.

Wiens, Rubena M., 85, Inman, Kan., died May 17. Spouse: Henry R. Wiens. Parents: Henry J. and Agatha Enns. Children: Don, Larry, Richard, Mary Ann Peters, Dorothy Sand; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 21 in Inman.

Zehr, Walter E., 77, Castorland, N.Y., died May 14. Spouse: Ramona Lyndaker Zehr. Parents: Daniel and Mary Lehman Zehr. Children: Jay, Gayle Musser, Vern, Roger, Colin; 17 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 18 at First Mennonite Church of New Bremen, Lowville, N.Y.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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Hesston College is accepting applications for the position of ***administrative assistant to the president***. This person coordinates activities of the president's office, including reception, project management, calendar and travel management, information flow and document storage and retrieval. Also serves as liaison to employees, students and the various publics of the college. Qualifications include maintaining confidentiality, efficiency, accuracy, excellent communication skills and proficiency with Microsoft Office applications, as well as acquaintance with Hesston College and Mennonite Church USA structures and constituencies. Bachelor's degree and related administrative office experience preferred. This position will begin July 1 or earlier. To apply, send resumé to: Human Resources Office, Hesston College, P.O. Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062 or email wendells@hesston.edu. EOE.

Workshop proposals are being sought for the **Mennonite Health Assembly**, March 2-5, 2006, in Sunset Beach, N.C. Workshops are 90 minutes in length and will address practical or cutting-edge ideas for board members, leaders, health-care practitioners or pastors. For a detailed list of specific topics and to submit your proposal online visit www.mhsonline.org or contact the MHS Alliance office at 800-611-4007. Deadline for submitting a proposal is July 8.

Ministry positions open at **Forest Hills Mennonite Church**, Leola, Pa. We are currently hiring ***part-time youth and young adult minister, part-time education director and a part-time worship and music director***. Forest Hills is a member of Atlantic Coast Conference and a congregation of 275. There is a desire to combine any two positions based upon applicant's gifts. For more information go to www.foresthillschurch.org or call 717-656-6227.

Editor sought for **Timbrel** magazine for Mennonite women and annual Bible study. Qualifications include ability to envision publication content, work independently and with dispersed team. Half-time position begins summer 2005; may be based at home, flexible hours. See www.MennoniteWomenUSA.org/New.asp. Contact Rhoda Keener, rhodak@mennonitewomenusa.org, 717-532-9723.

Dock Woods Community, a continuing-care retirement community located in Hatfield, Pa., is seeking a ***part-time chaplain*** in our Dock Meadows assisted-living facility. This position is responsible for visiting new residents, hospital visiting, spiritual and emotional support to families, worship leading and preaching for Sunday morning services and planning/participation in memorial services. Devotions, Bible studies and prayer meetings are also included in this position. In order to qualify for the position, candidates must have a bachelor's degree in addition to CPE training. The candidate must also be credentialed or be able to be credentialed by the Franconia Mennonite Conference.

Dock Woods Community offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Interested candidates should send resumé along with salary requirements to the HR Dept., 275 Dock Drive, Lansdale, PA 19446 or fax to 215-565-2413; www.dockwoods.com

Goshen College seeks a ***part-time assistant campus minister***. To apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time manager*** for the Harrisburg Discipleship Center to coordinate program and financial systems. Short-term missions and some financial/office management experience preferred. Begins Aug. 1 or sooner. Contact Jeanette Hess at 717 898-2251 or jeanetteh@emm.org by June 30.

Mennonite sailors at Charlotte 2005: Longtime sailors Ken Quenzer and Everett Thomas invite you to an informal get-together at Charlotte 2005. We'll learn about each other's experiences and maybe plan a Mennonite regatta or bareboat cruise. Meet in the lobby of Hilton Charlotte Center City at 8 p.m. Tuesday evening, July 5. We'll decide then where to go for a late-evening snack and conversation. For more information, you can also email EvBarbThomas@aol.com or call 574-533-6143.

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Mennonite Mission Network seeks ***participants for mission exploration trip to Thailand***, Dec. 23-30, 2005, with Hmong Mennonite Churches Mission group. Exploring outreach to Hmong students studying in Thailand. Build friendships with Hmong Mennonites from the United States and Canada. Other opportunities for new partnerships in Argentina, Africa and Asia also available. Contact NewMinistry@MennoniteMission.net or call Lefuarn Harvey at 866-866-2872 for information or to propose new ministry exploration elsewhere.

Maintenance technician: **Spruce Lake Retreat**, a dynamic, multifaceted camp ministry affiliated with the Mennonite Church, seeks mission-minded person for this full-time position on our maintenance team, responsible for the upkeep and development of grounds and buildings. Applicant shall be a team player and have experience/training in building trades and/or groundskeeping. Competitive wage and liberal benefits package. On-site housing may be available. Position is open immediately. Spruce Lake is located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania; see our Web site at www.sprucelake.org. Send resumé to Facilities Director, RR#1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email personnel@sprucelake.org

Mennonite Church USA Communications is inviting applications for the position of ***creative manager***. Working closely with a team of professional communicators, the creative manager leads and coordinates the writing, graphic design, print production and media creation functions for the denomination. This full- or part-time position will be based either in MC USA's Great Plains office in Newton, Kan., or its Great Lakes office in Elkhart, Ind. The successful candidate will have experience in communications or marketing, strong writing skills and a track record for managing multiple priorities and detailed projects.

To apply for this position, submit a letter, resumé and writing samples to Barth Hague, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46526, or BarthH@MennoniteUSA.org. Position open until filled.

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Goshen College invites nominations and/or applications for the position of ***president***, expected to assume office sometime between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006.

Goshen College is a fully accredited four-year, liberal arts college located in Goshen, Ind., affiliated with Mennonite Church USA. Additional information about the college can be located at www.goshen.edu.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate for president will exhibit three essential qualities: embrace and energetically promote the mission of the college, "to educate servant leaders for the church and the world;" support and implement the strategic priorities of the institution, including Goshen College's new strategic plan; embody core values of the college and exemplify a mature and vibrant Christian faith, characterized by the gifts of the Spirit.

A terminal degree from an accredited college or university is expected.

Search process: Nominations and/or letters of application with CV or resumé may be submitted to Rick Stiffney, Chairman of the Search Committee, at andreab@mennoniteeducation.org or through postal mail to GC Presidential Search Committee, Mennonite Education Agency, 63846 County Road 35, Suite 1, Goshen, IN 46528-9621.

The search committee will begin reviewing applications in Spring 2005 and continue until the position is filled.

Women and minority people are encouraged to apply. Goshen College, an affirmative action employer, is committed to Christian beliefs and values as interpreted by the Mennonite Church.

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Part-time conference minister for **NY Mennonite Conference** beginning October 2006. Conference profile available: http://nymennon.bfn.org/. MLI required. Contact Philip Martin amcpastor@highstream.net, 716-937-0412. Applications accepted through October 2005.

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There is a cure for the summertime blues

Gordon Houser

Whether in summertime you get the blues or you find "the livin' is easy," take some time to pick up a good book and let it affect your life. Here are some possibilities:

Bible: The Good Book is a book of many books, and many good books continue to be written to help us understand those books. Perhaps the most perplexing and misunderstood book of the Bible is Revelation (not Revelations). Two recent books look at it from a decidedly non-*Left Behind* perspective. *Can I Get a Witness? Reading Revelation Through African American Culture* by Brian K. Blount (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, $16.95) uses a cultural studies approach to argue that Revelation is a story of suffering and struggle under oppression and that John called people to live by the ethic of witnessing. Blount draws interesting parallels to African American culture. For example, he writes, "The thread of resistance to oppressive power that runs through John's hymns resonates with a parallel theme in the music of African America."

Conversations With Scripture: Revelation by Frederick W. Schmidt (Morehouse, 2005, $12.95) is less academic and more accessible than Blount's book yet in a similar vein. Schmidt evaluates three dominant approaches to Revelation—as road map, myth and history—and argues that John's book asks a single question: "Will those of you who live in Asia Minor, knowing the deeper nature of reality, time and the future, live your lives in the City of Babylon or the City of God?"

Another popular book of the Bible is Psalms. *A Turbulent Peace: The Psalms for Our Time* by Ray Waddle (Upper Room Books, 2003, $14) presents a one-page devotional commentary on each of the 150 Psalms. Waddle, a longtime religion writer, comments on the text and relates it to contemporary issues in what he calls a "psalms memoir."

Jesus: Two new books look at our Lord as presented in the Gospels. *A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed* by James D.G. Dunn (Baker Academic, 2005, $12.99) points out flaws in the past Jesus' quests by making three key observations: (1) "Jesus made an impact on those who became his first disciples, well before his death and resurrection," (2) Jesus operated in an oral culture and (3) "the characteristic features running through and across the Jesus tradition give us a clear indication of the impression Jesus made on his disciples during his mission."

Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels by Frances Taylor Gench (Westminster John Knox, 2004, $19.95) explores six stories from the Gospels of women encountering Jesus. She draws on feminist perspectives, noting that "all of us bring our own political, gender, racial and religious biases to a biblical text, which affect not only what we see but even the questions we think to ask." Gench makes helpful observations and includes group study suggestions, questions for discussion and resources for further study.

Spirituality: Two recent books (among many) that address this tricky topic are *In the Fire of the Burning Bush: An Initiation to the Spiritual Life* by Marko Ivan Rupnik (Eerdmans, 2004, $15) and *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology* by Eugene H. Peterson (Eerdmans, 2005, $25).

Rupnik, a Jesuit priest in Rome and both a visual artist and a theologian, draws on many Orthodox writers to emphasize that "Love is always concrete" and opposes any gnostic denigration of the physical. He writes, "The spiritual life consists in seeing our daily life, this world and this history in a new light with the help of the Holy Spirit." His short chapters are filled with insights worth pondering.

Peterson, author of the Bible translation *The Message*, brings years of pastoral experience and teaching to his topic, which he is careful to distinguish from much popular "spirituality." Spiritual theology, he writes, "is a protest against theology depersonalized into information about God" or "functionalized into a program of strategic planning for God." He uses the image of play (the title comes from a sonnet by Gerard Manley Hopkins) to explore spiritual theology in a thorough and wise manner. He writes that " 'Trinity' is the theological formulation that most adequately provides a structure for keeping conversations on the Christian life coherent, focused and personal." He pays careful attention to language. For example, he writes that for our ancestors, Spirit "was sensual. It was the invisible that had visible effects."

There are many more books to help you fight the blues. So find one and kick back. TM

FILMS

Crash (R) follows a melange of characters from various ethnic-cultural groups over a 24-hour period in Los Angeles. The film sets up racial stereotypes, then turns them on their heads. While the situations seem a bit contrived, they confront us with the racism that pervades our society. The fine writing and acting take us to a level of reflection rare in movies.

The Interpreter (PG-13) is a so-so thriller that takes us into the world of African politics. It also addresses spiritual themes and includes this great line: "Vengeance is a lazy form of grief."

Star Wars: The Revenge of the Sith (PG-13) is the final episode of George Lucas' epic fantasy. After the first two (actually parts IV and V), this series slid downhill. The many special effects cannot overcome the lame dialogue and pop Buddhism. This one commits the storytelling sin of not providing a plausible motivation for Anakim Skywalker's conversion to the dark side (Darth Vader).

Downfall (R) is a German film about Hitler's last days in a bunker in Berlin before committing suicide. Based on eyewitness accounts but mostly fiction, the monsters of the 20th-century become more human, if not less evil, in this gripping film. Bruno Ganz's portrayal of Hitler is outstanding.

Photo courtesy of Mennonite Historical Archives, Goshen, Ind.

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Everett J. Thomas

Rules help discernment

But all things should be done decently and in order.
—1 Corinthians 14:40

For the first time in Mennonite Church USA's young history, a pastor has been disciplined for performing a same-sex wedding ("Ministerial Credential Suspended," June 7). In an unrelated story, a congregation's membership policy was judged by its conference to be inconsistent with Mennonite Church USA membership guidelines ("Hyattsville Guidelines Found 'Inconsistent,' " March 14). Recently a Mennonite camp decided it would no longer allow an advocacy group to use its facilities for its annual Queer Camp ("Camp Friedenswald Denies BMC Space," May 17).

These actions in the last three months illustrate that our denomination is in a much stronger position than it was in 1999 and 2000 to respond to matters of sexuality and faithfulness. For that we can be grateful to the many leaders who worked tirelessly at three critical documents: Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, *A Polity for Mennonite Leadership* and "Membership Guidelines for the Formation of Mennonite Church USA."

Although some individuals involved in these recent situations carry a great deal of pain—and may struggle to proceed with integrity—these events are not roiling the church as they would have just five years ago. That is because we have established the necessary framework of accountability and discipline. Consequently it appears that new governance structures are working. It took several decades to get to this point.

The church is the discernment community—and has ultimate authority to determine what is right and wrong.

Our confession of faith, adopted in 1995 by both General Conference Mennonite Church (GC) and Mennonite Church (MC) delegates, was a decade in the making. It was adopted almost unanimously by both groups and is now the bedrock upon which our discernment begins. It also provided the foundation for two binational Mennonite denominations to form two national denominations: Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. But even though few expected the GC-MC merger process to result in separate national structures, even that outcome may be providential: with the Canadian government on its way to legalizing same-sex marriage, Mennonite Church Canada is free to respond without needing to fashion its response within a binational church context.

A GC-MC committee spent eight years in the 1990s hammering out the second document now providing some order. *A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership* created a governance structure for authorizing ministerial credentials. The leadership polity document also is clear about what is expected of those who receive a ministerial credential. For example, the ethics section lists, "Major theological deviation from Christian and Anabaptist Mennonite understandings," as one example of a breach of trust that can cause a conference to initiate a hearing and review process.

But it was a third document that enabled our fledgling denomination to begin finding its way through the incendiary issue of membership for sexually active gays and lesbians.

Mennonite Church USA membership guidelines allows each congregation to establish its own policies for individuals to be members within it. However, no congregation can just do whatever seems right in its own eyes if it wants to be part of Mennonite Church USA. In order for any congregation to be a part of our denomination, it must belong to an area conference—and each area conference establishes its criteria for membership within it. That means: for a congregation to be part of a conference its membership policies for individuals must satisfy conference guidelines.

While some leaders and congregations continue to disagree with our confessional statements—or how they are interpreted—it is helpful to have the rules in place. They are necessary in our tradition, which has believed for nearly 500 years that the church is the discernment community—and has ultimate authority to determine what is right and wrong. The new guidelines, polity and confessional statements created during the formation of Mennonite Church USA are now helping us do such discernment decently and in order.—*ejt*

The Mennonite

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July 5, 2005

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Sun on the world

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

O God, while we rested last night, you sheathed every branch of every tree in white. Even the vines that festoon the guy wires were treated to this hoary beauty treatment. The corn stubble endeavored to look elegant with its icy coat against a backdrop of shades of gray. All created in the darkness of night. Yet when this miracle appeared to us through the morning fog, we involuntarily closed our mouths and widened our eyes. Incredulous at the way you can change our world without our knowledge, we stand and stare. In silence our hearts cry, "O Lord, our Sovereign, How majestic is your name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1). We see a new earth, clean and pure, given to us without cost and not as the result of any demand we may have made. It is a quintessential gift.

Driving this morning, I am lost in the wonder of each new scene as it is composed from the foggy background. It is as if the world is completely at peace. Praise be to God. However, as I slurped in the beauty along the highway, I hit a sparrow on the wing who did not anticipate that steel could move so fast or hurt so much. I heard the quiet thud and looked in the rearview mirror to see a bird flailing on the gray road. It was an abrupt and abrasive example to me of the weapons we carry within us. Thich Nhat Hanh* said, "We often think of peace as the absence of war, that if powerful countries would reduce their arsenals, we could have peace. But if we look deeply into the weapons, we see our own minds—our prejudices, fears and ignorance. Even if we transported all the bombs to the moon, the roots of war and the reasons for bombs would still be here, in our hearts and minds, and sooner or later we would make new bombs." He is right. We extol the beauty of God's hoary world yet surreptitiously carry the weapons of war within us.

Today the sun rose high in the sky, blazing late over your crystalline world. The same sun that illuminates your world of inestimable beauty here on earth, O God, also shines on our world of fear. So we wonder how you can stand the great chasm, Lord, between the beauty of your creation and the ugliness of the world we have created? The sun you created shines on someone who raped another this week. The sun saw us slap another's face in anger this week, never thinking that it was the face of God. We cursed others publicly with our talk over coffee and diminished people privately with our thoughts. The sun above witnessed our commerce as we swindled, consumed and gorged ourselves on resources needed by others beyond our immediate sight. We vote for fear in our national elections and town council discussions on zoning. Is there anything we do that is not motivated by fear? We use our weapons of fear as naturally as we breathe, and the sun sees it all.

So we ask again, How can your one sun shine on so much that is pure and good and so much that is evil at the same time? Our weapons, our thoughts and our words embarrass us in the light of your sun.

Lord God, we fall on our knees humiliated by your beauty in this world and we beg for your mercy. Forgive us for offering grace to ourselves while unleashing our truth on others. We fear not only others, but in shame we fear ourselves. We fear our own anger and anxiety. We fear our intolerance and arrogance. We admit to holding within us every weapon capable of destroying peace on earth. Send us your angel again to tell us to fear not so that maybe, maybe then we will grow to trust you.

Hear our prayer, O Lord.
Amen. TM

*Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese monk who spent the years during the Vietnam War trying to bring peace between North and South Vietnam.

TheMennonite

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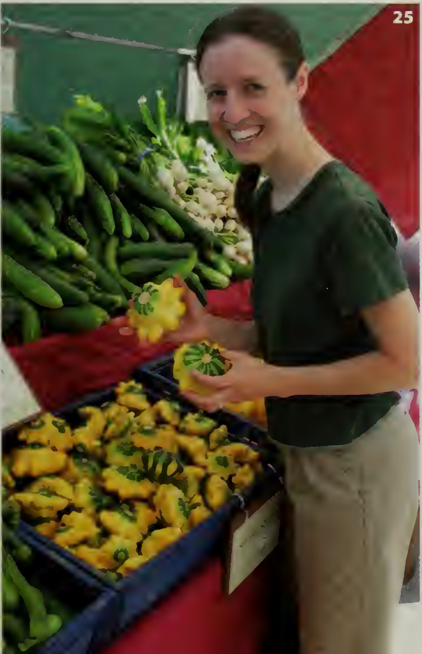

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite church. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.
—Editors

Grieving Terri Schiavo

Re "Grieving the Terri Schiavo Case" (ACHE, June 7): My 2½-year-old daughter Elizabeth spent three weeks under hospice care after an 18-month-long struggle with illness. The decisions my husband and I made concerning our daughter's care were agonizing. No parent should have to make these decisions.

Elizabeth died in 2002. Even though several years had passed when this case was brought to the forefront, the pain and guilt brought about by our decisions all came rushing back. Watching the media and "good Christian people" rush to judgment in the Schiavo case made me insecure in my decisions. The generalizations made by politicians and their willingness to intervene against a family's wishes, was terrifying for someone who had made some of those same decisions.

Watching religious leaders scoff at the idea of "quality of life" and "end of life" care made me angry. They were helping fan the flames of discontent just to further their political agenda. Hospice centers around the country work hard to keep suffering to a minimum for their patients. Unless she was in a bad facility, which I doubt due to all of the eyes on the situation, there is no way she was in the condition described by those against "allowing" her to die. Special care is taken to keep the mouth and lips moist. Lotion is applied to the skin to keep it from cracking.

While I believe in a family's right to make these end-of-life decisions, I hesitate to say they should be forced to make them in the interest of medical or social justice. Inability to pay for this costly care should not be reason enough to end life support.

We struggled to have our daughter treated as a whole person. Her pain, though expressed abnormally, was still valid. Society still sees people with severe brain damage as maybe not quite as important as the rest of us. We valued Elizabeth. It was because we valued her and acknowledged her pain that we were willing to let her go.

These decisions need to be made by caring, loving families. If the family disagrees there is a system of checks set up by the courts. It is not the place of society or politicians to step in to appease their guilt or meet some political agenda.*—Lisa Stoltzfus, Manheim, Pa.*

Kotva claims "most physicians with the appropriate experience and credentials judged Mrs. Schiavo to be PVS." This is debatable, but even if true, most does not mean all. It seems common for patients to perform beyond the expectations of pessimistic doctors, and even people who are PVS have the right not to be killed.

The claim that Terri would have wanted to have her feeding tube removed so she would die by starvation and dehydration seems based primarily on hearsay evidence from her husband, who has been living with another woman since 1995 and had children with her, so it was perhaps to his advantage for Terri to die. And the Schindlers were willing to sacrifice and take care of their daughter.

Even if Terri wanted her feeding tube removed, removing it would have been wrong for the same reason asssited suicide is wrong.*—Jerry C. Stanaway, Lombard, Ill.*

Barn building

Ed Higgins' creative poem "Roofing the New Barn" (June 7) is certainly well-written. In my mind I went back to the early 1930s, watching a barn being built on a neighboring farm. But what does building a barn have to do with the Mennonite church? Am I missing something?*—Ronald V. Woelk, Hutchinson, Kan.*

Rules and discernment

Re "Rules Help Discernment" (Editorial, June 21): I worry that our Mennonite church is promoting a way to "quiet" minority dissension among us in our orderly way of disciplining "wayward members."

This troubles me. Many incidents in history show churches quieting dissension, including major issues of civil rights, lay leadership and the role of women and children in the church.

Thank God for the rowdy members of churches that said, "No, the church is wrong." I hope we will always have that faction in our Mennonite Church and will not be complacent to voices among us that feel God is calling us to be different from what our organization dictates.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue comes out while thousands of Mennonites gather in Charlotte, N.C., for Mennonite Church USA's assembly and convention. Look for reports on that gathering in our next issue, dated July 26. Three articles on the following pages call us to be clear about who we are and communicate that to people around us. Jerry Kennel (page 8) points to research that says there are people who want to hear the unique messages Mennonites have. Bert Newton (page 12) notes that many non-Christians have a better understanding of Jesus' life and teachings than some Christians. Jesus faced a similar challenge in his day. God calls us to shout our message from the rooftops, he writes, "because we're not going to hear it on CNN or Fox News." David Boshart (page 14) argues that if we are to be a missional church, our congregations must learn to do theology as base communities. He offers six handles for being in but not of the world. In these pages you'll also learn about stewardship, biblical storytelling and developmental disabilities.*—Editors*

Lord, help us if we have silenced our dissenters. I recommend that you allow the minority to have a voice in *The Mennonite*. I know they do not feel that everything was done "decently and in order."—*Grace Dickerson, Washington, D.C.*

"Rules Help Discernment" insightfully explores what doing all things "decently and in order" may look like when 1 Corinthians 14:40 provides the spectacles through which to view Mennonite Church USA governance issues.

I wonder what governance dynamics would look like if viewed through additional eyeglasses, for instance, Micah 6:8, that key Old Testament text in which the prophet emphasizes that what the Lord above of all requires is "to do justice and to love kindess and to walk humbly with your God."

Or Jesus' inaugural address in Luke 4:18, in which he claims as his mission statement bringing good news, release, sight, freedom to the poor, captives, blind, oppressed. Or Jesus' affirmation in Luke 10:27 that the lawyer who wonders what really matters rightly answers his own question when he cites, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."—*Michael A. King, Telford, Pa.*

Those with depression need professional help

Re Janae Yoder's article "Light in the Darkness" (June 21): Churches who are considering acting on the suggestion of support groups within the church for those suffering from depression should consider the following: Is the church prepared to provide support for those with other issues, such as drug/alcohol/pornography addictions, arthritis, infertility? Is there a liability risk of supporting (which can be misconstrued as counseling) those needing the expertise of a licensed counseling facility? Will there be support groups for families that suffer from people with these afflictions?

As a recovering member of a Sunday school class subjected to a member with severe depression for five years, my experience says those with this condition can only benefit from compliance with their doctors for medication and professional counseling. Our class bears wounds from the person we believed we were supporting. I agree we need to listen, but then we need to get psychiatric licenses.—*Valerie Belknap, Inman, Kan.*

Give up fear

Fear was my first response to the ad "Now Speak with Boldness" (June 21, page 27). The agenda reads like white supremacy and far-right ideology. The editorial heightened my fear that our church is becoming a hostile, unfamiliar place.

Fear turned to anger as I investigated the ad's mention of Ernst Zundel, an apparent Holocaust denier and Nazi sympathizer who was allegedly extradited to Germany under circumstances similar to the "extraordinary renditions" the Bush administration uses to place terror suspects outside U.S. civil protections. Reprehensible as his views are, is Zundel being treated fairly?

Fear of the other tempts us to demonize our opponents. State and church need rules, but the church must model the restorative justice of the reign of God, not the retributive justice of the state.

I'll give up my fear that a right-wing fundamentalist fringe is taking over the Mennonite Church if you give up your fear that breaking bread with gays and lesbians will bar you from heaven.—*Joel Ewy, Newton, Kan.*

Ad is anti-Semitic

I am concerned that *The Mennonite* sold advertising space to the organizers of the "Now Speak With Boldness" forum to be held in Charlotte during the Mennonite Church USA convention. The forum's Web site shows a disturbing anti-Semitic agenda; one speaker believes the Holocaust did not happen. *The Mennonite* needs to disassociate itself from this event and warn Mennonites to speak up against it.—*Paul Heidebrecht, Wauwatosa, Wis.*

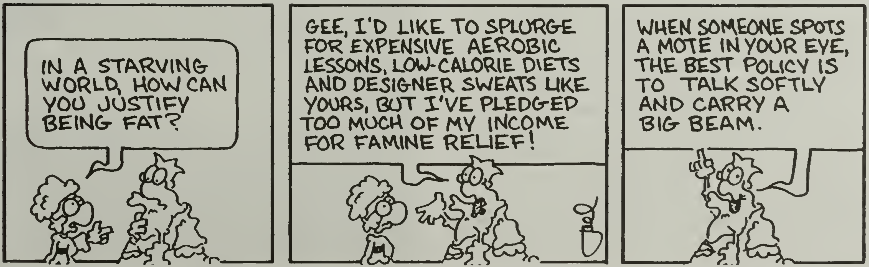
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Is your church sending a delegate to the Charlotte 2005 Assembly?

- ○ Yes (76%)
- ○ No because we're not that interested (11%)
- ○ No because it's too expensive (9%)
- ○ Not sure (4%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


IN A STARVING WORLD, HOW CAN YOU JUSTIFY BEING FAT?
GEE, I'D LIKE TO SPLURGE FOR EXPENSIVE AEROBIC LESSONS, LOW-CALORIE DIETS AND DESIGNER SWEATS LIKE YOURS, BUT I'VE PLEDGED TOO MUCH OF MY INCOME FOR FAMINE RELIEF!
WHEN SOMEONE SPOTS A MOTE IN YOUR EYE, THE BEST POLICY IS TO TALK SOFTLY AND CARRY A BIG BEAM.

IN BRIEF

Bluffton shortstop plays in Europe

Bluffton (Ohio) University shortstop Riordan McClain, a junior from Upper Sandusky, Ohio, is spending two months this summer in Europe playing baseball and doing mission work. McClain was selected to participate on an Athletes in Action baseball team. AIA's main purpose is to spread the word of Christ out into the world through numerous collegiate sports.—*Bluffton University*

MCC supports Palestinian women

The East Jerusalem YMCA, a Palestinian Christian organization supported by Mennonite Central Committee, provided 123 women with loans in the past year for agricultural projects. Taghreed Aref, a single woman in the northern West Bank village of Raba, planted grape vines on a parcel of her family's land after attending a workshop and receiving a loan at the YMCA. "After my father saw this land turn fertile and green, he registered the land in my name as a reward for my accomplishments," Aref says. —*MCC*

Anabaptists arrested in Eritrea

LONDON—Amnesty International reports that on May 28, government security forces raided and detained 250 to 300 guests at a wedding celebration in Asmara, Eritrea. Those arrested belonged to Meserete Kristos, an evangelical Anabaptist church outlawed by the current government of Eritrea. In the early morning hours after the arrest, passersby said they could hear the detainees singing and praising God.

Amnesty International reports that this kind of harassment and persecution has been relentless since May 2002, when the government of Eritrea ordered the closure of all churches not belonging to the Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Lutheran denominations. So far, at least 36 denominations have been closed. Many followers of these churches and their leaders have been imprisoned, harassed and tortured.

For more information on the arrests visit www.release-eritrea.org.uk—*Release Eritrea*

Church leader notes crisis in Zimbabwe

STRASBOURG, France—Two years ago, Zimbabweans in Bulawayo and beyond eagerly anticipated hosting the Mennonite World Conference Assembly 2003.

Today they cling to memories of the miracle of that event and the support they felt from their global faith family. They also wonder if that family has now forgotten them as other crises around the world have taken over the news.

"Zimbabwe is crazy," said Danisa Ndlovu, Brethren in Christ bishop of Zimbabwe and MWC vice president, in a June 8 telephone interview during a North American visit. "It is much worse than in 2003. Then, money was in short supply. Now basic commodities are. The need for food is incredible."

An already desperate situation due to continued drought, almost no harvest, a collapsed economy and the aftermath of another flawed election in March plummeted to new depths in May. That's when Robert Mugabe's authoritarian government apparently adopted a scorched-earth policy, detaining thousands of people, routing large numbers of street vendors from their stalls and burning makeshift homes in shantytowns on the fringes of major cities, forcing people to flee to rural areas.

On his way to his office in Bulawayo in early June, Ndlovu saw police officers rounding up street vendors, arresting them and loading them into trucks. He doesn't know where they were taken or whether they have been released.

Published reports indicate that as many as 30,000 residents in cities, including Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, and Harare, the capital, have been arrested or detained. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change reported that police and soldiers had forced up to 1.5 million people from their homes. Due to gas shortages, many spend hours waiting in long, winding vehicle lines at gas stations, hoping for a fuel delivery. Others run out of fuel and are stranded with their belongings as they attempt to transport themselves to rural areas, reported Ndlovu.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Biking to Charlotte

Dave and Cookie Wiebe, part of First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., were riding 1,400 miles on their tandem bike from Kansas to Charlotte, N.C. They left Newton June 16 to travel six states by July 4, when they were to attend Charlotte 2005, the joint churchwide assembly with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. The ride was to raise funds for Mennonite Mission Network's transportation needs in Argentina. Those wanting to contribute may write "Bike to Charlotte" or "B2C" on their donation and send it to Mennonite Mission Network, 722 Main St., Newton, KS 67114.—*Mennonite Church USA*

Church in Thailand 'comes of age'

PALANCHAI, Thailand—The monthly joint worship services for the Life Enrichment Churches of Ubon Ratchathani in northeast Thailand celebrated a new milestone on May 22, when they officially "came of age."

In a special ceremony, Eastern Mennonite Missions president Richard Showalter and Glenn Kauffman, EMM representative to Asia, passed the baton for full self-governance to the leaders of the circle of 10-12 house churches—now more than 100 baptized members.

Skip Tobin and André Provost, leaders of the initial EMM church-planting team that began outreach among the Isaan people in 1995, gave their blessing. Tilahun Beyene, an Ethiopian who serves as a mission-with-church strategic catalyst for EMM, shared from the experience of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, which has moved through a similar transition, and prayed for the unity of the Holy Spirit.—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Iraqi activists plan boycott of U.S. products

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Christian Peacemaker Teams worker Joe Carr attended a meeting June 3 of Iraqi activists discussing a boycott of U.S. and Israeli goods that have flooded Iraqi markets since the invasion.

One woman said: "We are now living under another dictatorship. You see what kind of democracy we have, seems more like bloodacracy. You see what kind of liberation they brought: unemployment, murder and destruction. We must resist this; it is the right of any occupied people to resist. Especially the women, we can use the simplest weapons of resistance, a financial boycott."

"They want to make Iraq a duty-free market for their products and put Iraqi products out of business," another person said. "They're importing food that's expired and harmful to us. The Ministry of Health has found items now available that were forbidden because they are cancerous or cause sterility." Since medication is also difficult to obtain, imitation and dangerous drugs are appearing in stores and on the black market.

Those gathered insisted that plenty of Iraqi products could replace these cheap imports. They plan to launch an information campaign warning Iraqis about the health problems caused by these products and making the links between U.S. products and the occupation.—*CPT*

Soldier's pacifism earns his release

Deshawn Reed (left), with Kent Yoder of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, in March learned his petition to the U.S. Army as a conscientious objector was approved. Reed worked through the Military Counseling Network in Germany to prove his claim.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Malcolm, Martin and the Mennonites

GOSHEN, Ind.—For the month of May, Malinda Berry, a 1996 Goshen College graduate and current doctoral student at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, returned to her alma mater to teach a special course, "Malcolm, Martin and the Mennonites," during the three-week term when students concentrate on one class, weaving together religious, historical and sociological issues. "I am bringing forth issues I care about in a community I care about," she said.

Malinda Berry

Throughout the course, Berry highlighted the differing responses of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X to racism and oppression based on contrasting life experiences, which led to King's acceptance as a venerated American icon and the ownership of Malcolm X as a hero mostly for black America only. After examining the two men's lives, Berry expanded the course conversation to include the broader issues of racial identity and racism and how they connected with theological themes, such as of violence, suffering, abuse and forgiveness.

Anabaptist peace theology and Mennonite responses to racism were then discussed. "Both King and Malcolm X agreed that the way the world is isn't the way the world should be. And we are called to help make the world what it ought to be, which many Mennonites have come to agree with as well," she said. "I see this class as a form of witnessing."—*Goshen College*

MDS calls for helpers in California, Florida

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Disaster Service is asking for volunteers, particularly cooks and skilled construction leaders, to help those recovering from fires in California and hurricanes in Florida.

Julian, Calif., has openings in July and is scheduling workers for this fall, following wildfires there. Contact 760-765-2345, julian@mds.mennonite.net, P.O. Box 1445, Julian, CA 92036-1445.

Arcadia, Fla., has openings in July and is scheduling workers for this fall, following a hurricane there. Contact 863-494-2579, arcadia@mds.mennonite.net, c/o Pine Creek Chapel, 1267 SW Pine Chapel Drive, Arcadia, FL 34266.

Wauchula, Fla., has openings in July and is scheduling workers for this fall, following a hurricane there. Contact 863-773-0232, wauchula@mds.mennonite.net, c/o Northside Baptist Church, 912 North Eighth Ave., Wauchula, FL 33873.—*MDS*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

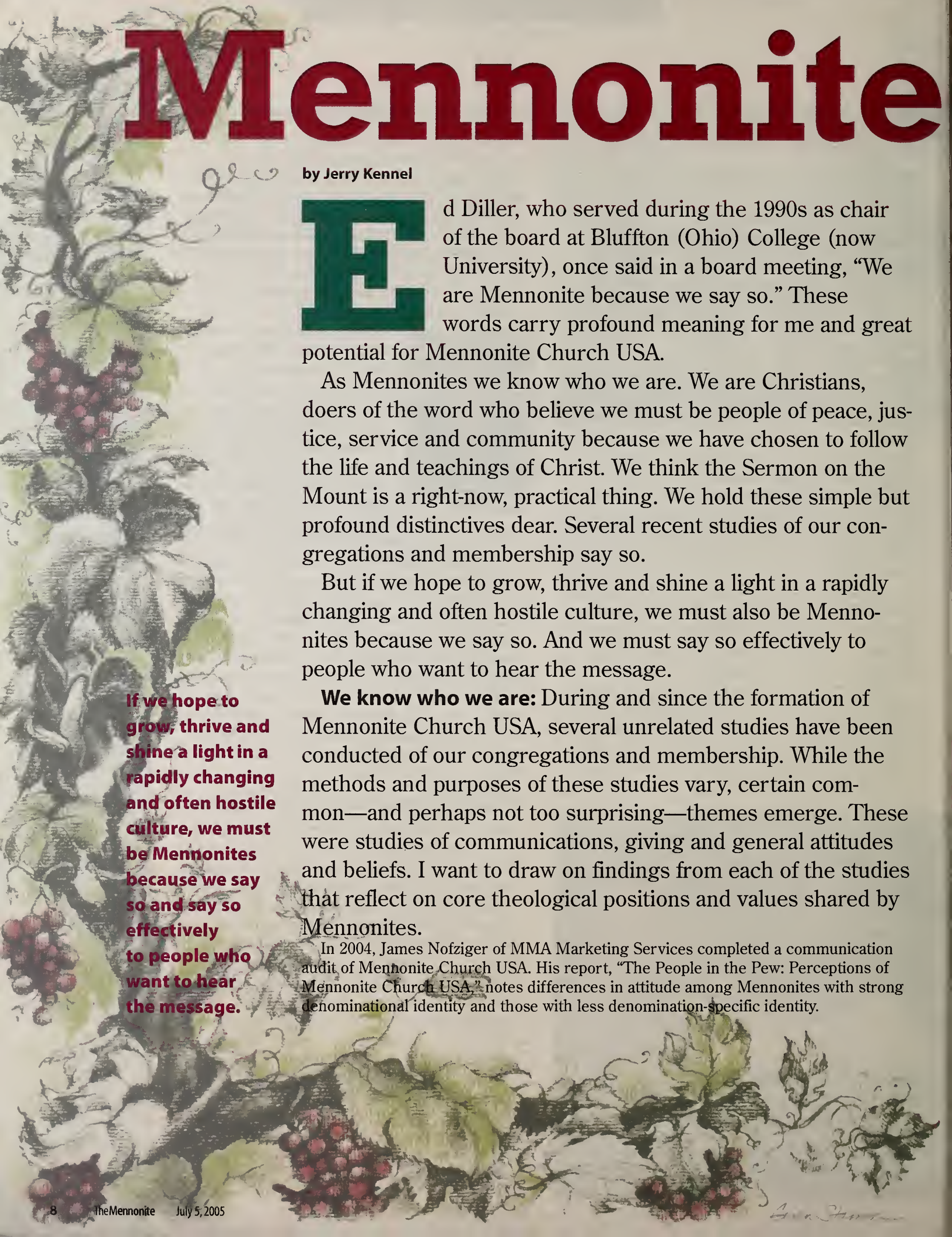
IN BRIEF

Holy days in October

Rabbi Arthur Waskow points out that the sacred Muslim lunar month of Ramadan and the sacred Jewish lunar month of Tishrei, which includes the High Holy Days and Sukkot, both begin Oct. 3-4. Also, Oct. 4 is the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi in the Catholic Church; Oct. 2 is Protestants' Worldwide Communion Sunday and Gandhi's birthday. And in mid-October, parallel to Sukkot, there are major Buddhist and Hindu festivals.—*SojoMail*

AI criticizes U.S. human-rights acts

In London on May 25, Irene Khan, Amnesty International's secretary general, listed the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, the detention of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and the so-called rendition of prisoners to countries known to practice torture as evidence that the United States "thumbs its nose at the rule of law and human rights." The White House dismissed the accusations as ridiculous and unfounded. Khan labeled the U.S. detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, where more than 500 prisoners from about 40 countries are being held, as "the gulag of our times."
—New York Times



Mennonite

by Jerry Kennel

Ed Diller, who served during the 1990s as chair of the board at Bluffton (Ohio) College (now University), once said in a board meeting, "We are Mennonite because we say so." These words carry profound meaning for me and great potential for Mennonite Church USA.

As Mennonites we know who we are. We are Christians, doers of the word who believe we must be people of peace, justice, service and community because we have chosen to follow the life and teachings of Christ. We think the Sermon on the Mount is a right-now, practical thing. We hold these simple but profound distinctives dear. Several recent studies of our congregations and membership say so.

But if we hope to grow, thrive and shine a light in a rapidly changing and often hostile culture, we must also be Mennonites because we say so. And we must say so effectively to people who want to hear the message.

If we hope to grow, thrive and shine a light in a rapidly changing and often hostile culture, we must be Mennonites because we say so and say so effectively to people who want to hear the message.

We know who we are: During and since the formation of Mennonite Church USA, several unrelated studies have been conducted of our congregations and membership. While the methods and purposes of these studies vary, certain common—and perhaps not too surprising—themes emerge. These were studies of communications, giving and general attitudes and beliefs. I want to draw on findings from each of the studies that reflect on core theological positions and values shared by Mennonites.

In 2004, James Nofziger of MMA Marketing Services completed a communication audit of Mennonite Church USA. His report, "The People in the Pew: Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA," notes differences in attitude among Mennonites with strong denominational identity and those with less denomination-specific identity.

Finding and speaking to a new demographic for Mennonite Church USA

because we say so

For study participants with high Mennonite identity, "becoming a missional church" was the phrase selected to best represent Mennonite Church USA. Right behind that for this group was "sharing God's love in word and deed," followed immediately by "working for peace and justice." It seems fair to conclude that the act of sharing God's love, with visible results in peace and justice, is the way people with high Mennonite identity define the missional church. Therefore, we believe we do loving service that yields peace and justice. That is the essence of being Mennonite.

Similarly, J. Ron Byler, in his summary observations for Envisioning a New Mennonite Church, a congregational survey conducted in 2000 by Mennonite Church USA, notes that "we are people who follow Jesus." This is no small matter and is not the starting point for much of contemporary Christianity. But it is for Mennonites. Other key phrases in Byler's observations include the following:

"The Anabaptist distinctive of 'walking the talk.'

"Our strongest identity as Mennonites is as people that serve others.

"Mennonite Central Committee enjoys the deepest 'brand loyalty' among our people.

"We view our congregations as communities."

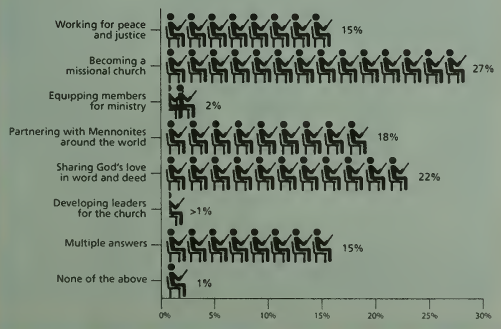
Other summary observations and implications from the study include strong affirmation that Mennonite Church USA be built around the Vision: Healing and Hope statement. This study concludes that our intent is to be missional, which for Mennonites means that "at all levels of the church, we are called to witness in word and deed, creatively holding together peace and evangelism, service and building communities of faith." Here again is strong affirmation from our people of the distinctives of our faith.

Finally, in the Research Study of Denominational Giving conducted this year for Mennonite Church USA by Michael Wiese and Richard Gerig of Advancement Associates, Inc., the authors find that "those members most likely to insist on giving to denominational ministry … fit a general profile: They tend to be older, contribute out of a habit of giving in response to what God has given them (and) are denominationally oriented." This sounds pretty much like James Nofziger's high Mennonite identity group.

Wiese and Gerig also note a high level of dedication to Mennonite Central Committee in this segment of the membership, again evidence of walking the talk as a central passion of the Mennonite brand of Christianity.

Not surprisingly, the participants in this study also identified the following as the foundational characteristic that distinguishes Mennonite Church USA from other denominations: "a strong stance on living and encouraging a life of peace and the promotion of nonviolent resolutions to conflict." In fact, Wiese and Gerig assert that "the articulation of this position, grounded in the example of Jesus, is likely to be one—if not the primary—unifying element within the population." Attention to core teachings of discipleship was also important, as well as a sense of community.

THE PEOPLE IN THE PEW:
Perceptions of Mennonite Church USA



These studies confirm it. We know who we are. We are Christians who believe we must be people of peace, justice, service and community because we have chosen to follow the life and teachings of Christ.

What might happen if we now turned away from studying these distinctives and put our energy into speaking them clearly to a whole new set of people who want to hear the message?

There are people who want to hear this unique message.

During the early 1980s I was an employee and graduate student at New York University, in the heart of New York City's Greenwich Village. Clearly outside my faith community, I was pleas-

We are Christians who believe we must be people of peace, justice, service and community because we have chosen to follow the life and teachings of Christ.

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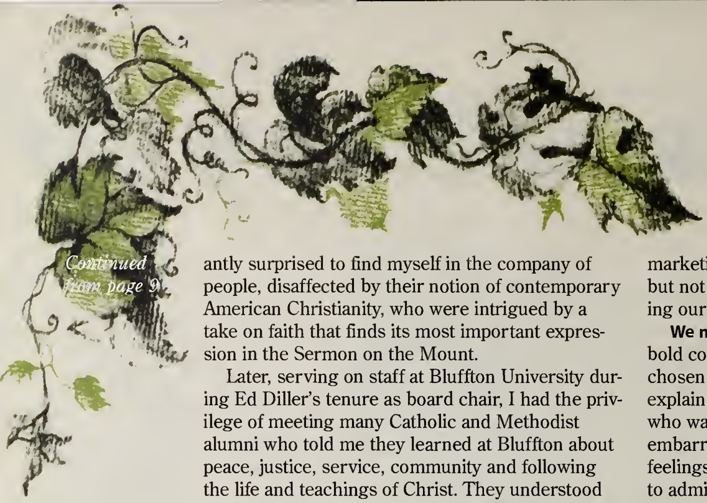

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antly surprised to find myself in the company of people, disaffected by their notion of contemporary American Christianity, who were intrigued by a take on faith that finds its most important expression in the Sermon on the Mount.

Later, serving on staff at Bluffton University during Ed Diller's tenure as board chair, I had the privilege of meeting many Catholic and Methodist alumni who told me they learned at Bluffton about peace, justice, service, community and following the life and teachings of Christ. They understood these things to be distinctives of Anabaptist-Mennonite faith. Because faculty and staff at Bluffton were willing to say so, lives were changed.

We must learn to say with bold confidence that Mennonite is the way we have chosen to be Christian. Then we must go on to explain clearly what that means.

This experience further confirmed my growing awareness that people are hungry for the unique Anabaptist-Mennonite message, if only we will speak it to those who want to hear. Since then, participation in a small but active Mennonite fellowship in a university community has served to underscore my conviction.

The majority of members and participants in Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship, my current congregation, did not grow up Mennonite or even particularly aware of Mennonites. But they have come to participate in a faith experience that rings true for them, an experience that takes the life and teachings of Christ seriously and expresses those teachings in lives of peacemaking, service and activism. Many ask where we have been all their lives, because they have always wanted to be part of a community that shared their convictions on these matters.

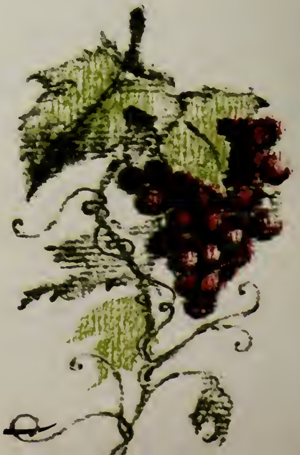
We know who they are: The amazing thing is, as Mennonites we actually know who these people are. We have documented their demographics in our efforts, of all things, to establish and grow Ten Thousand Villages stores. We know, for instance, that the Ten Thousand Villages customer is generally highly educated, globally aware and interested in issues of peace and social justice. We know where they live, what kind of income they have, the mix of stores they like to shop in and the messages and media that are most likely to get their attention and response.

But in our manner of doing rather than saying, I suspect it has not occurred to us to use the same marketing intelligence and voice to carry the unique Mennonite take on faith to these same people. Perhaps I should not be surprised that, in our hands-on missional culture, we can figure out the marketing of crafts to support Third World artisans but not make the connection for intelligently sharing our faith with our economic and social peers.

We need to say so: We must learn to say with bold confidence that Mennonite is the way we have chosen to be Christian. Then we must go on to explain clearly what that means. There are people who want and need to hear this. We need not be embarrassed, afraid or ashamed. These negative feelings, in fact, are better applied to our hesitancy to admit openly and publicly the true passionate center of our faith.

Let's say it. Being Mennonite means being a Christian committed to a life of peace. We say so. Being Mennonite means being a Christian committed to a life of compassionate service. We say so. Being Mennonite means being a Christian committed to following the life and teachings of Christ, the kingdom on earth, as in heaven. We say so. And if we truly mean it, we will learn to say so in messages and media that will connect with our many American peers who long to hear. Good news. We know who they are.

Jerry Kennel is a member of Fort Collins (Colo.) Mennonite Fellowship and a principal of Advancement Associates, Inc., a consulting firm serving peace churches and other denominationally related nonprofit organizations.



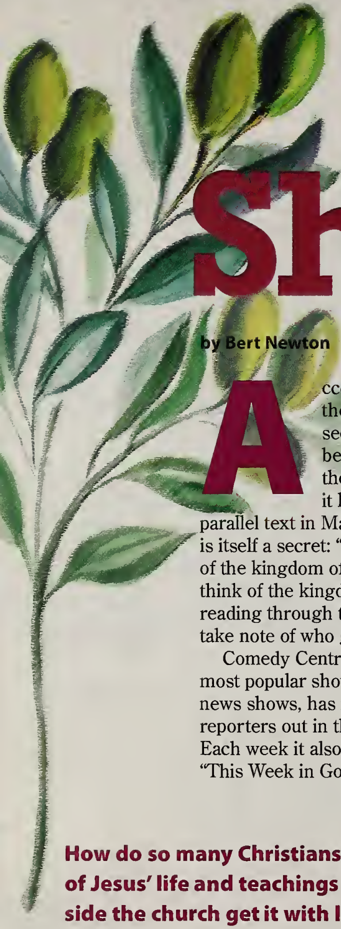
On keeping up the place

by Dora Dueck

On keeping up the place
Expelled from Eden, I discover
I am keeper of a plot of earth: our
house and yard. Also heir of the curse:
decay, resistance to what I do,
grass to cut, leaking eavestroughs,
old fences chipping paint, cracks in
concrete (just hairlines, he said) where
weeds thrive. Sprouts in the faults
of Adamic failure are long-rooted,
resilient.

I have three consolations. Unquiet
urge to battle, borne on ancient memory
of the privilege of work, to name
and order. Reward of beauty in worm-
rich beds, mown-lawn incense
on a summer sabbath, colors ripening.
The prophecy of winter: death's pause
for toil to be forgotten, my long sweet rest
while seeds brood plans for another
wild spring.

Dora Dueck is a member of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.



Shout *the secrets*

by Bert Newton

According to the Gospel of Matthew, the kingdom of heaven contains secrets. Jesus says, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (13:11). In the parallel text in Mark, Jesus states that the kingdom is itself a secret: "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God" (4:11). We don't usually think of the kingdom of God as a secret. When reading through the Gospels, however, we should take note of who gets the secret and who does not.

Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*, one of the most popular shows on television, parodies daily news shows, has its own anchor, Jon Stewart, its reporters out in the field and its commentators. Each week it also has a religion segment called "This Week in God."

How do so many Christians miss this central element of Jesus' life and teachings when so many people outside the church get it with little or no struggle?

Once Steven Colbert, the host of that segment, showed actual news footage of a televangelist expressing his support for the president's war on terrorism. The televangelist said, "We've got to kill the terrorists before the killing stops. I support the president. We need to chase them all over the world, for 10 years, if it takes that long. We need to blow them up in the name of the Lord." At that point, the camera switched back to Colbert, who said, "And in a related story, Jesus has quit."

As an evangelical Christian, what I found interesting about that segment was the response of the secular studio audience. They laughed and clapped robustly. I thought, We evangelical, Anabaptist Christians struggle with much of the rest of the church over whether Jesus is about peace—we spend time working out a theology of peace—and for this secular studio audience there is no struggle at all. They don't have to work out anything. They just assume Jesus is about peace. They assume Jesus would not agree with the televangelist, would not support the president's war on terrorism or talk about blowing people up in the name of the Lord. They get it.

Once I spoke with a friend who is not a Christian and does not come from a Christian background but has studied the New Testament. She said anyone who reads the New Testament has to conclude that Jesus taught nonviolence. The certainty of her tone made me think of all of the Christians who have not come to that conclusion. I thought, How do so many Christians miss this central element of Jesus' life and teachings when so many people outside the church get it with little or no struggle?

Then I remembered that Jesus was least understood by the religious in-crowd and created his community among the outcasts and "sinners." They "got it." Perhaps it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus is often understood better outside than inside the church. I take no pleasure in this. I was raised in the church; I love the church; I'm committed to the church. This observation is frustrating and painful. But there is also good news in it.

It means that even when the church fails to hear the word of God, even when the church fails to hear Jesus' gospel of peace and justice and turns it into a self-help message that implicitly sanctifies the status quo, the structures of violence and injustice, even when the church is co-opted by the powers and authorities of this world, the word of God still gets through to people. Through the prophet God says, "[My word] shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11).

God's word goes into the world, seeping into the darkest corners, the most unlikely places and people. It spreads through society, Jesus said, like yeast through dough; it cannot be stopped. It goes where the powers and authorities never suspect, because they can't hear it, can't hear this powerful word that brings down kings and lifts up the poor of the earth. They can't hear this wonderful secret, can't comprehend it. It is a secret that spreads

God's word finds its way into the most unlikely places and people.

# of the kingdom

beneath their radar and destroys their foundation. It builds a new community, a new world, a new heaven and earth. God's word will not return void but will accomplish its purpose.

This is good news for those of us on the margins of the church. As we struggle with the rest of the church, with our "Christian" nation, with ourselves and are tempted to give up, God's word will accomplish its purposes in this world.

William Payne of Christian Peacemaker Teams recounts times when he was walking through San Cristobal in Chiapas, Mexico, and heard someone call his name. Each time the voices belonged to young men who had quit the military because of the witness of CPT.

At that time CPT had a project in Chiapas in solidarity with the Abejas, a movement of pacifist Christians who practice daily communal prayer and Bible study, a collective economy and nonviolent resistance to the Mexican military and the paramilitary groups.

CPT had been going out to the military bases with the Abejas and holding public prayer vigils. When they did so, they talked and prayed with the soldiers, challenging them to leave the military.

When CPT reported that they were engaging in this practice in Chiapas, I didn't think it was the right thing to do because the individual soldiers, I figured, were there for economic reasons—they needed work—and were brainwashed by the military. I even emailed CPT and questioned their practice of challenging these young men to leave the military. But I was wrong. This practice yielded its fruit in season.

Talking and praying with soldiers might have seemed futile, but God's word did not return void; it accomplished its goal in these men. Like a secret hidden from the powers of this world, the word of God did not seek out generals, presidents or prime ministers but simple soldiers. It led simple men to refuse to obey orders to kill, to no longer comply with the powers of domination, the satanic forces of fear and violence, and it set them free through the Spirit of life.

God's word finds its way into the most unlikely places and people. Let's not give up hope or lose heart at this crucial time. What we have heard whispered in our ears we must shout from the rooftops. This gospel of peace and justice, this word of God that brings down the powerful and lifts up the poor of the earth is a wonderful secret let loose to subvert the world order, turn it upside down and inside out, make the first last and the last first, heal the sick and bind up the wounded and set the prisoners free, proclaim the year of Jubilee liberation, the redistribution of wealth so that everyone can have a vine and fig tree to sit under with no one to make them afraid.

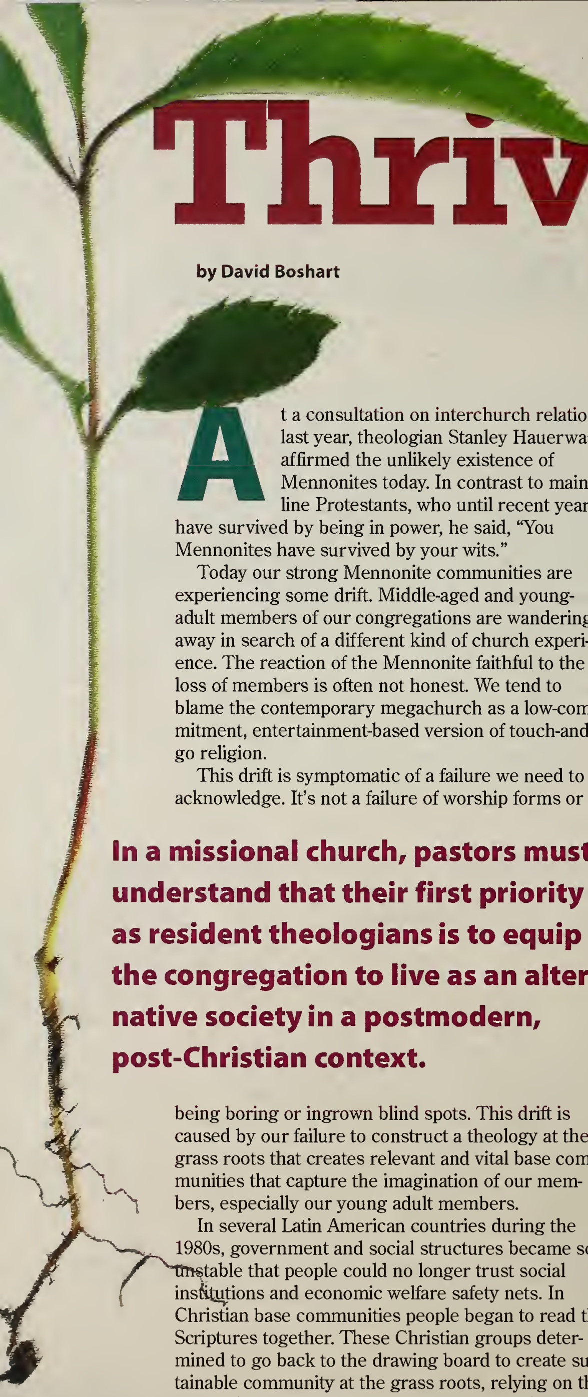
We must shout this secret because we're not going to hear it on CNN or Fox News. They are not going to tell us about the Abejas in Chiapas or the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil (which began after peasants came together in base communities to study the gospel). These stories are secrets of the kingdom and come to us in whispers.

What we have heard whispered in our ears we must shout from the rooftops because we are not going to hear it on CNN or Fox News.

The gospel we have, this good news for the poor, this wonderful secret, comes to us in whispers through its many translations and interpretations. The powers and authorities of this world have reinterpreted it for us so that it is not good news for the poor and irrelevant to matters of justice. But they don't get it and don't want anyone else to get it. The gospel has been entrusted to us, if we are ready to hear it, as a wonderful secret, whispered in our ears, that we must shout from the rooftops.

Let us not give up in these desperate, crucial times. The word of God will not return void but will accomplish its purposes in the world.

Bert Newton is associate pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church.



Thriving by

by David Boshart

At a consultation on interchurch relations last year, theologian Stanley Hauerwas affirmed the unlikely existence of Mennonites today. In contrast to mainline Protestants, who until recent years have survived by being in power, he said, "You Mennonites have survived by your wits."

Today our strong Mennonite communities are experiencing some drift. Middle-aged and young-adult members of our congregations are wandering away in search of a different kind of church experience. The reaction of the Mennonite faithful to the loss of members is often not honest. We tend to blame the contemporary megachurch as a low-commitment, entertainment-based version of touch-and-go religion.

This drift is symptomatic of a failure we need to acknowledge. It's not a failure of worship forms or being boring or ingrown blind spots. This drift is caused by our failure to construct a theology at the grass roots that creates relevant and vital base communities that capture the imagination of our members, especially our young adult members.

In a missional church, pastors must understand that their first priority as resident theologians is to equip the congregation to live as an alternative society in a postmodern, post-Christian context.

In several Latin American countries during the 1980s, government and social structures became so unstable that people could no longer trust social institutions and economic welfare safety nets. In Christian base communities people began to read the Scriptures together. These Christian groups determined to go back to the drawing board to create sustainable community at the grass roots, relying on the spiritual resources of Christian brothers and sisters to imagine a way to thrive in an unpredictable and often dangerous world.

Is it possible the ingenuity that caused Christian base communities to thrive in Latin America could be what traditional Mennonite congregations need to thrive again in North America today?

Before the "missional church" age, the pastor's central role was to serve as a chaplain to congregation and society. This is a natural inclination when the church has strong institutions that provide expertise in certain specialized ministries of the church. But when we compartmentalize theology into "congregational ministries" and those things "beyond the congregation," certain aspects of congregational thinking atrophy. In a missional church, pastors must understand that their first priority as resident theologians is to equip the congregation to live as an alternative society in a postmodern, post-Christian context. Pastors need to lead congregations who expect to be on the margins of society, thriving by their wits.

As wonderful and effective as our institutions of higher education are, we need to adopt a base community mentality that does theology from the grass roots rather than borrowing a trickle-down theology from the institutions. I am not devaluing the contribution of our church institutions. On the contrary, I suspect our institutional personnel want to develop an organic partnership with congregations in the task of doing theology as base communities rather than being relegated to the role of compartmentalized specialists.

Congregations that thrive see the tasks of church development and mission as inherently theological in nature. They ask: How is God in the world? Where is God at work in our world? From reading the Scriptures, what do we learn about the nature of God's politics? How has God uniquely equipped our congregation to face the challenges and opportunities posed by our local context? I suggest six handles for doing theology that will enable our congregations—even our rural ones—to become thriving centers of mission.

1. We need to adopt a base-community mentality as the avenue for (re)building strong congregations.

our wits

Six handles for doing theology as base communities

The vitality of our congregations should not be determined by the economic or political vitality of our nation. We need a theology that informs how we are in the world, one that shapes our responses to micro and macro economic and political shifts rather than settling for one formed by shifting forces and trends in the world.

Notice how economy and politics tend to shape our theology. If the rural economy takes a downturn, we are suddenly "called" to urban opportunities. Whenever there is an economic slump, seminary enrollment increases. These are examples of how politics and economics make theology. A base community does not trust the ecopolitical categories as defined by the surrounding culture.

2. We need to reclaim the spiritual ministry of local, intracongregational economic development. Strong, traditional Mennonite communities weren't always here. Mennonites moving into these places had to create economic opportunities from a blank slate. We quickly affirm economic development as a key to forming strong Christian communities in other parts of the world. Why should we consider this kind of work any less spiritual because it happens here?

The church is beginning to see the merit of working with the business community to think theologically about how business can strengthen the church. We need to reinvite gifted business people back into the heart of congregational life. Experienced business people need to be equipped to become mentors, be banks, develop partnerships and understand how their businesses have theological and spiritual merit in the life of the congregation as a base community.

3. We need to join Jesus in rejecting victim postures when our congregational vitality seems threatened. In John 10:18, Jesus says: "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." Mennonite congregations need to embrace this authority toward life as a Christian community. This doesn't mean vital Christian communities will be pain free. But when congregations fail to thrive they need not look up to the powers of this age but only to the relevance of their theology.

Shrinking rural communities are in a state of mourning, feeling they have been robbed of something precious. Decline in rural and nonrural congregations is not the result of economic forces that impinge on them. Doing theology as base communities will show us how to structure vital congregational life in any circumstance. Our history has taught us that if Mennonites are well-equipped for anything they are well-equipped to thrive in adverse conditions.

4. Congregations need to be on the cutting edge of forming a theology of health care. We've developed strong Mennonite hospitals, retirement, nursing care and mental-health facilities that provide wonderful, needed health services. While these institutions provide important and theologically informed care, congregations cannot afford to stop imagining new forms of local and affordable health care or thinking about creative solutions to a health-care system headed for cataclysmic failure. We dare not wait for the government or the denomination to solve the problem of health care for our base communities. The congregation has the mobility and fluidity to do the creative, innovative work to anticipate life-giving solutions when the social safety net fails.

We quickly affirm economic development as a key to forming strong Christian communities in other parts of the world. Why should we consider this kind of work any less spiritual because it happens here?

5. Congregations need to jump the fence from our migrating martyr mentality to becoming prophetic hosts to the nations. Our history is of a migrating martyr community. Today we are not

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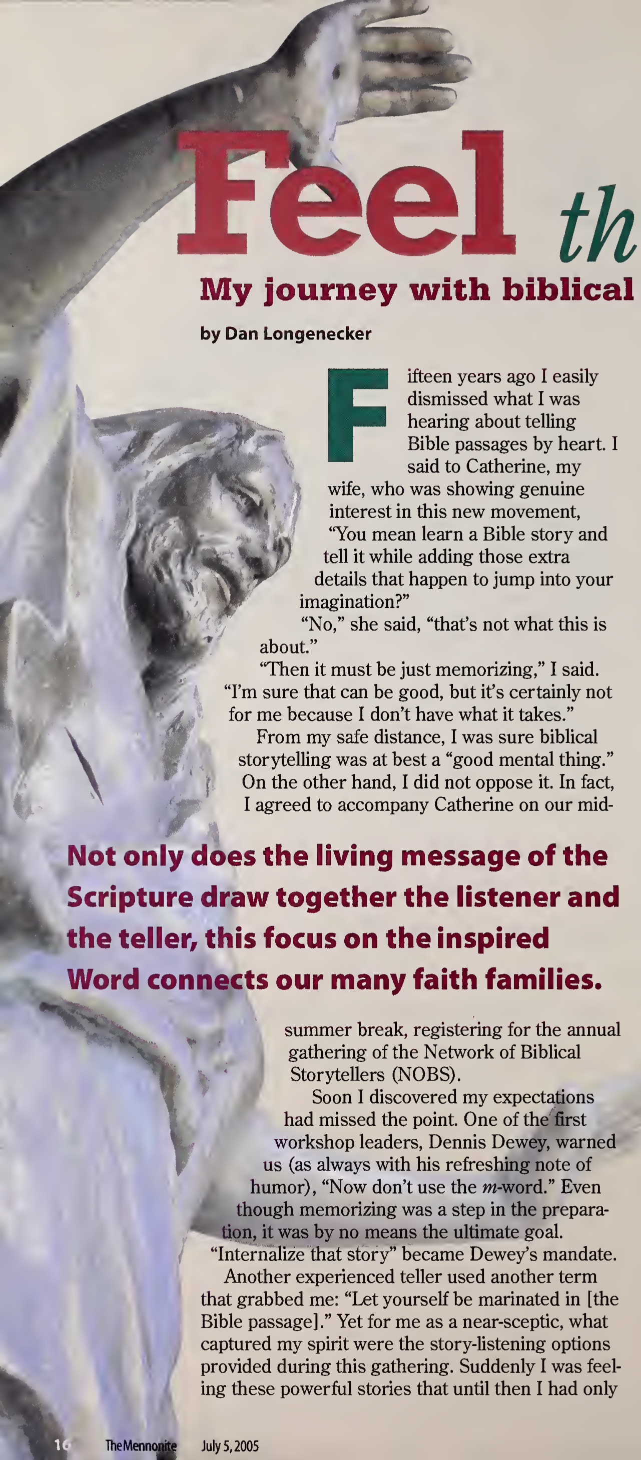

Feel *the Story*

My journey with biblical storytelling

by Dan Longenecker

Fifteen years ago I easily dismissed what I was hearing about telling Bible passages by heart. I said to Catherine, my wife, who was showing genuine interest in this new movement, "You mean learn a Bible story and tell it while adding those extra details that happen to jump into your imagination?"

"No," she said, "that's not what this is about."

"Then it must be just memorizing," I said. "I'm sure that can be good, but it's certainly not for me because I don't have what it takes."

From my safe distance, I was sure biblical storytelling was at best a "good mental thing." On the other hand, I did not oppose it. In fact, I agreed to accompany Catherine on our midsummer break, registering for the annual gathering of the Network of Biblical Storytellers (NOBS).

Not only does the living message of the Scripture draw together the listener and the teller, this focus on the inspired Word connects our many faith families.

Soon I discovered my expectations had missed the point. One of the first workshop leaders, Dennis Dewey, warned us (as always with his refreshing note of humor), "Now don't use the *m*-word." Even though memorizing was a step in the preparation, it was by no means the ultimate goal. "Internalize that story" became Dewey's mandate.

Another experienced teller used another term that grabbed me: "Let yourself be marinated in [the Bible passage]." Yet for me as a near-sceptic, what captured my spirit were the story-listening options provided during this gathering. Suddenly I was feeling these powerful stories that until then I had only thought about. Where did those tears come from?

One of the tellers heard one of us listeners say, "You make that story live." He said, "No, I just avoid killing it." To prepare to tell a passage of Scripture by heart is to let the story get into our heart—far beyond just trying to penitrate it mentally. The telling then deepens the experience by awakening the hearts of the giver and the receiver.

Much of the Bible had been told (and retold) well ahead of being written down. The recent interest in telling should not be seen as starting a new thing. On the other hand, I see this quiet yet dynamic movement as the work of the Holy Spirit. Not only does the living message of the Scripture draw together the listener and the teller, this focus on the inspired Word connects our many faith families. For example, NOBS has from its start become ecumenical and has always included a small, active group of Mennonites, several of whom also serve on its board.

I'm also excited by the spiritually healthy effect storytelling has on the Bible itself. The Scripture is fully human yet no less divine. Emotion is unavoidable as the teller enters the human writer's story. This invites the listener to join the teller, as both can now open their lives to the writer's practical message. Good storytelling holds the whole story together. NOBS also gives excellent seminary-level emphasis on understanding the story's context but avoids emphasis on how it must be interpreted.

As Catherine and I provided and directed the pastoral care of a large retirement community (Virginia Mennonite), we sensed how biblical storytelling could add vitality to our ministry. People with less energy to focus on sermons found themselves emotionally absorbed in these stories. Yet we sensed no weaker connection with the most alert minds in that wonderful community.

As to my not having what it takes to memorize, I soon realized that vision and commitment were the real issues for me. While more mental strengths could make my job easier, that is not what makes the difference. Some of us simply need to work harder to internalize these precious stories. The

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Associated
Mennonite
Biblical
Seminary

AMBS
window

Summer 2005
Volume 15 Issue 3

❷ 2005 Graduates
Thirty-seven receive degrees and certificates

❺ Alumni Awards honor two for varied ministries

❽ Thirty teens participate in !Explore

Called into God's future

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary serves the church as a learning community with an Anabaptist vision, educating followers of Jesus Christ to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world.[1]

Every phrase in this new mission statement for AMBS signals something important that God is calling us to be or do:

Our name reminds us that we are a *biblical* seminary, always seeking to let Scripture shape our theology and ministry.

AMBS *serves the church.* We underscore our commitment to teach and learn in ways that strengthen the people of God, not just the academic guild.

We are a *learning community.* Whether at Elkhart, at extension sites or online, students and faculty expect the Spirit to create community that embodies something of the Reign of God. We rejoice that the seminary community includes students from more than a dozen denominations.

We seek a forward-looking *Anabaptist vision.* AMBS focuses on what animated the first Anabaptists: a people centered on Jesus, fed by Scripture, accountable to each other, passionate about mission and committed to following Christ in life.

AMBS fulfils its vocation by *educating.* We study and learn in classroom, congregation and the world. Practice and theory inform and reshape each other with continuous feedback.

Every aspect of seminary life shapes us as *followers of Jesus Christ.* In a world with competing loyalties and lords, we confess Jesus as the way, the truth and the life.

We pray that AMBS students will be effective *leaders* in congregations, conferences, the academy and other ministry venues. Seminary education fosters spiritual and intellectual growth for graduates to become initiators, shepherds and servant leaders in the Reign of God.

We find our deepest joy by participating in *God's reconciling mission in the world.* Faculty and students seek to align ourselves with what God already is doing in the world. Both peacemaking and evangelism are essential to the mission of the church.

The new AMBS mission statement sets out a big dream that calls the seminary and the church into God's future. You can be part of that future by studying at AMBS or helping make it possible for others to do so, and by praying for those who teach and learn.

– J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president ●

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[1] This mission statement was approved by the AMBS Board in June; it now is awaiting final approval by the MC USA and MC Canada education agencies.

2005 Graduates

Thirty-seven earn degrees and certificates

Thirty-seven students graduated from AMBS on May 20, 2005. Eighteen men and 19 women completed programs of study to receive degrees or certificates:

MDiv	Master of Divinity
MAPS	Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS	Master of Arts: Theological Studies
MACF	Master of Arts in Christian Formation
MAME	Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism
Cert	Certificate in Theological Studies

Find out more about the graduates here and at the AMBS web site: www.ambs.edu.

Charlene Harris Allen MDiv. Will become pastor of Walkerton (Ind.) United Methodist Church. She and Michael, her husband, have three children. She currently is a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Elkhart.

Matthew Christian MDiv. Will complete studies this summer in an internship and also will explore bivocational ministry with training as a home health care provider. He is married to Anita Mast Christian. He is a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Wadsworth, Ohio.

Sue Conrad MDiv. Will become associate pastor of East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa. Currently Sue is a member of Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Sara Dick MDiv. Pursuing a church ministry position. Sara is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

Laura J. Doty MDiv. Will participate in further training opportunities. She is a member of St. John's United Church of Christ in Elkhart, Ind.

Kevin Drudge MDiv. Discerning ministry opportunities while returning to Winkler, Man. He and Rochelle, his wife, have two children and are expecting a third in July. They are members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler.

David Elkins MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. David and Becky, his wife, have two daughters. They are members of Southside Mennonite Church, Springfield, Ohio.

Amy Marie Epp MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Amy is married to Joe Hamilton, also a 2005 AMBS graduate. She is a member of Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.

Twilla Epp MDiv. Will do a Clinical Pastoral Education placement at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., from September 2005 to May 2006. She is a

Charlene Harris Allen, Matthew Christian, Sue Conrad, Sara Dick, Laura Doty, Kevin Drudge member of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Sask.

Jeremy Garber MDiv. Pursuing a Ph.D. in theology and literature, studying manifestations of theology in popular culture, and exploring pastoral ministry assignments. He is married to Buffy Garber and they have one daughter. He is a member of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

J. Darrell Gascho MDiv. Director of the Great Lakes Discipleship Center. Darrell is married to Julie Hertzler and they have two children. He is a member of Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

The year of the bell

The 2004–2005 school year, according to comments by Nelson Kraybill at the opening of the commencement service, was the year of the bell. In December, the bell from the Wadsworth Institute—the first Mennonite institution of higher learning in North America, 1868 to 1878—found a new home on the AMBS campus. On April 27, representatives of the Wadsworth community and the AMBS community dedicated the new bell tower. During the commencement service, graduates received a small brass replicas of the bell along with their diplomas. As the congregation applauded them, they rang their bells to join in the celebration. Paula Snyder, one of the graduates, is from Waterloo, Ont., and the bells were crafted and donated by Ervin and Erma Steinmann and Riverside Brass of New Hamburg, Ont.

David Elkins, Amy Marie Epp, Twilla Epp, Jeremy Garber, J. Darrell Gascho

2005 Graduates

Joseph Hamilton MATS with concentration in biblical studies. Joe is married to Amy Epp, also a 2005 AMBS graduate.

Jason Harrison (not pictured) MACF. Exploring a mission-service assignment. Jason is married to Rhiannon Harrison and is a member of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel MACF. Will serve as Pastor of Christian Formation at Morden Mennonite Church, Morden, Man., with her husband, Harold. They have three children and are members of St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

J. Robert Keim (not pictured) Cert. Will continue as associate pastor of First United Methodist Church, Sturgis, Mich. Robert and Judi, his wife, have three adult children and six grandsons.

SeongHan Kim MAPS. Will serve as media director of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Korea and will look forward to future involvement in Mennonite ministry in South Korea. SeongHan and HeeYoung, his wife, have three children.

Brent Kipfer MDiv. Will continue as pastor of Brussels (Ont.) Mennonite Church. He and Sarah, his wife, have three children.

Marla Langelotz MACF. Will serve as assistant pastor of education and family ministry at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. She and Karl, her husband, have three children.

Curtis C. Miller MATS in theology and ethics. Will enter a chaplaincy residency at St. Joseph Hospital in South Bend, Ind. Curtis and Jessica, his wife, have two children. He is a member of First Baptist Church, Lyons, Kan.

Melissa Miller MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Melissa is married to Dean Peachey and they have one adult son. She is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.

Homare Miyazaki (not pictured) MATS in biblical studies. Became pastor of Hatoyama Hope Church in the countryside of Tokyo, Japan, in April. He and Towako, his wife, are the parents of two sons.

GuiShik Nam MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment, hoping to be involved in Mennonite church planting in Korea. GuiShik is married to YounJu Park. While studying at AMBS, he was involved in Hively Jesus Village Church in Elkhart.

Jonathan Neufeld MDiv. Anticipates serving with Mennonite Church Canada in an urban setting. He is married to Melanie Neufeld, also a 2005 AMBS graduate, and they have one daughter. He is

Joseph Hamilton, Dianne Hildebrand Schlegel, SeongHan Kim, Brent Kipfer, Marla Langelotz

a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.

Melanie Neufeld MDiv. Exploring a community development assignment in Winnipeg, Man. She previously earned an MSW degree from Andrews University in a dual-degree program of the two schools. Melanie is married to Jonathan Neufeld, a 2005 AMBS graduate, and they have one daughter. A sister, Julie Rempel, is also a 2005 AMBS graduate.

Rachael Njiiri (not pictured) MAPS. Rachel came to AMBS from Murang'a, Kenya, where she was a member of St. James Cathedral.

Curtis Miller, Melissa Miller, GuiShik Nam, Jonathan Neufeld, Melanie Neufeld

Alumni Awards honor two for varied ministries

The 2005 Alumni Ministry and Service Awards honor two graduates of AMBS involved in many different kind of ministry: Ann Gingrich of Goshen, Ind., and E. Stanley Bohn of Newton, Kan.

The awards, announced on May 20 at a breakfast celebration of 2005 AMBS graduates, faculty and staff, will be presented to the recipients in their local areas this summer.

Ann and Paul, her husband, served as missionaries in Ethiopia from 1953 to 1969. When they returned to the U.S., she worked as an elementary school teacher. In 1987 she completed a Master of Arts: Theological Studies degree and for ten years was pastoral counselor at AMBS. For the last 15 years Ann has been involved in pastoral counseling for survivors of sexual abuse.

Ann Gingrich and E. Stanley Bohn, 2005 award recipients.

Stan earned a B.D. from Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago in 1955 and served as pastor in congregations stretching from Kansas City, Kan., to Manhattan, N.Y., and spanning more than 50 years. He has served as a conference minister in the General Conference Mennonite Church, taught at Jamaica Theological Seminary, served as executive secretary of the General Conference's Commission on Home Missions and served as staff at church camps. As a volunteer, he's been involved with Offender Victim Ministries, Habitat for Humanity and Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. ●

Craig Oury MDiv. Will complete his studies this fall and pursue a pastoral ministry assignment. Craig is a member of Valparaiso (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Lois Thieszen Preheim MDiv. Will continue involvement in her congregation, Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb., and in Central Plains Conference and Mennonite Church USA. She is married to Ron Preheim, and they have three adult children.

Julie Rempel MDiv. Pursuing Clinical Pastoral Education and pastoral ministry. Julie is married to Curtis Wiebe. She is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. A sister, Melanie Neufeld, is also a 2005 graduate.

O'Ryan Rickard MDiv. Will be pastor of three United Methodist churches near Lansing, Mich.: Salem, Lowe and Greenbush. O'Ryan and Joan, his wife, have two children. He now is pastor of two United Methodist Churches near Kalamazoo.

Joseph C.L. Sawatzky MDiv. Pursuing a mission assignment. Joe and Anna, his wife, have two sons. He is a member of Shalom Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Heidi Siemens-Rhodes MDiv. Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Heidi and Mitch, her husband, have one son. They are members of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.

Paula Snyder MDiv. Will become associate pastor of Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind. Paula and Darrin Belousek were married on June 18, 2005. She is a member of Bloomingdale Mennonite Church, Bloomingdale, Ont.

Melody Steinman MACF. Will provide spiritual formation and worship activities for people with developmental disabilities. Melody is a member of Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont.

Martha Turner Cert. (not pictured) Plans in process. Martha is a member of South Bend (Ind.) Friends Meeting.

Lois Unrau MDiv. Will teach one year in North Korea with Mennonite Central Committee, then explore long-term overseas teaching or pursue graduate study. She is a member of Evangelical Mennonite Church of Steinbach, Man.

Zer Yang MAME. Will assist his pastor in the Hmong Mennonite Church, Arvada, Colo., and in the future hopes to work in church planting and overseas mission. He is married to Phoua T. Yang and has eight children.

Jane Yoder-Short (not pictured) MATS in theology and ethics. Jane is a member of East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona, Iowa. She and Dale R., her husband, have five children. ●

Craig Oury, Lois Thieszen Preheim, Julie Rempel, O'Ryan Rickard, Joseph C.L. Sawatzky

Graduates invited to respond to Jesus' invitation, "Follow me"

Jonathan Neufeld, second from left, studied with Rev. Dr. Yvonne Delk in SCUPE, the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education in Chicago. AMBS is a partner in SCUPE and invited the longtime advocate for human and civil rights to give the commencement address. Jonathan and Melanie, his wife (right), are both 2005 graduates of AMBS and their daughter, Thalia, joined in the celebration after the service.

Using the story of Jesus' encounter with the disciples at the seashore after his resurrection and his request to Peter to "feed my sheep," commencement speaker Yvonne Delk urged graduates to follow Jesus' call.

Rev. Dr. Delk noted that graduates, like the disciples, are in a time of transition. Because of seminary studies, she said, "You know Jesus a little better as he invites you to follow him, sometimes where you may not want to go.

"Will you face boldly into the invitation to 'follow me'? When the call from God is specific and personal and it's got your name on it, you belong—body and soul—to God."

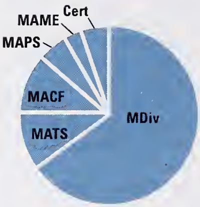
Then the lifelong advocate for human and civil rights outlined facets of the call: in addition to being specific and personal it is systemic and structural; it requires us to ask difficult questions; it goes beyond charity to justice and beyond denial to truth-telling. She concluded with the affirmation that God will be with the graduates in their ministry. "When you know you are loved unconditionally, you are called to love others unconditionally. All you have to do is simply follow."

Rev. Dr. Delk was the first African American woman ordained for ministry in the United Church of Christ, and has served world wide as teacher, organizer, executive and author. ●

Heidi Siemens-Rhodes, Paula Snyder, Melody Steinman, Lois Unrau, Zer Yang

Panorama

Degrees of 2005 graduates



MDiv—Master of Divinity	**24**
MATS—Master of Arts: Theological Studies	**4**
MACF—Master of Arts in Christian Formation	**4**
MAPS—Master of Arts: Peace Studies	**2**
MAME—Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism	**1**
Cert—Certificate in Theological Studies	**2**

Thirty teens participate in !Explore

!Explore: A Theological Education Program for High School Youth will involve 30 eleventh and twelfth graders this summer. Each group of 15 will spend three weeks together in service projects through DOOR in Miami, Fla.; in retreat activities at Amigo Centre and learning from professors on the AMBS campus. In addition, participants will spend five weeks in internships with their pastors or other leaders in their congregations. Through this program AMBS encourages youth to listen to whether God may be calling them to ministry.

Perry Yoder retires

Perry Yoder, professor of Old Testament, retired this summer after 21 years of teaching at AMBS. Perry is author of *From Word to Life: A Guide to the Art of Bible Study* (Herald, 1982); *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace* (Faith & Life, 1987). With Willard Swartley he was editor of *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies* (Westminster/John Knox, 1992) and with Mary Schertz he was author of *Seeing the Text: Exegesis for Students of Greek and Hebrew* (Abingdon, 2001). At a recognition event in May, Nelson Kraybill said, "A passion of your life has been to let the text of the Bible speak, and encouraging the church to learn the tools to let it speak to us."

Next Generation campaign

Next Generation, the fund-raising effort of AMBS, includes the following components. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 5.31.05
AMBS Fund	$ 5,800,000	Ongoing
Library and campus center	6,300,000	$4,363,195
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	22,400
Preaching laboratory	170,000	Fully funded
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,310,959
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,626,982
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,178,623
Other		465,610
Total	**$20,000,000**	**$16,452,859 82.3%**

Alumni News

Gerald Nussbaum, Master of Divinity 1987, Galena, Ohio, received the Outstanding Local Leadership Award from the Association of Professional Chaplains, a 3,500-member national association. Jerry received the award at the annual conference in Albuquerque, N.M., in April.

David L. Myers, Master of Divinity 1991, is executive director of Teen Living Programs in Chicago, Ill. The organization works with youth who are homeless in their transition from adolescence to adulthood, and from homelessness to independence.

Martha Smith Good, Master of Divinity 1977, retired in April 2005 after more than 30 years of ministry in the U.S. and Canada. She was the first woman to be ordained in the Mennonite Church in Ontario in 1982. In 1988 she earned a Doctor of Ministry from Toronto School of Theology.

Summer 2005
Volume 15 Issue 3

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen
Photos: Graduate groups–Steve Echols; others–Mary E. Klassen

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Thriving by our wits
Continued from page 15

being martyred. No one is asking us to leave. We need to stop being migrating martyrs and become hosts who build a colony of heaven where all tribes and peoples and languages and nations gather to worship God. Our heritage has uniquely gifted us for the task of inviting immigrant people who are fleeing oppressive situations in the same way our spiritual ancestors did. We need a theology that insists we can successfully build Christian community across racial lines to the enhancement of our spiritual vitality.

6. Finally, as base communities our congregations need to develop an alternative theology of retirement. Rather than spending the 20-plus years God has given retirees in warmer and more exotic climates in "peer-only" communities, we need to call our elderly to be present to bless the community that witnesses to the reign of God. We have borrowed a theology of aging rooted in our culture's infatuation with planned obsolescence. We need elders in our congregations with a clear sense of call who show us how to develop a robust theology that imagines a joyful life in the kingdom while living in a world whose temporal structures and political categories simply cannot be trusted.

Much attention and ink in church literature is given to ways of creating vision or articulating mission and strategic planning. But the task of building vital Mennonite congregations is inherently theological in nature. Mennonite theology, at its best, is done in base communities that seek to thrive as colonies of heaven in any and all circumstances. This is thriving by our wits.

> **We need elders in our congregations with a clear sense of call who show us how to develop a robust theology that imagines a joyful life in the kingdom while living in a world whose temporal structures and political categories simply cannot be trusted.**

David Boshart is pastor of West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Feel the Story
Continued from page 16

amazing thing for me is the growth of the emotional-spiritual hold these dynamic Bible passages have on my heart. Each time I retell the stories, the meaning goes deeper.

Because Scripture readings typically precede sermons, it took me awhile before I noticed something else—sometimes "the story *is* the sermon," the title of an NOBS assembly workshop I'm leading this summer (see box). In this case, the preacher's sermonic comments can precede the telling of this type of story.

In today's postmodern culture nearly everyone (including Mennonites) has been affected by what may be called a TV and www mentality. Our minds now think more pictorially, and regular Scripture readings often get tuned out due to our easy boredom. Furthermore, many Christians now give less attention to reading the Bible on their own. Is it not possible the biblical storytelling movement may be one of the Spirit's important ways of making opportunities out of such problems? Mennonite pastors and seminaries are relatively slow in awakening to the importance of the postmodern impact on the minds of their listeners and to the possibilities biblical storytelling represents.

Dan Longenecker is a member of Immanuel Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va., and serves interim co-pastorates with Catherine, his wife.

The theme of this summer's gathering of the Network of Biblical Storytellers is "Telling the Story in a Digital World." The keynote speaker is Tom Boomershine, professor of New Testament at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, who helped found NOBS and has authored many books. Other special tellers will be there. This year the three-day event happens Aug. 10-13 at a retreat center in Atlanta. NOBS can be a fun time to observe and enjoy the dynamic telling, worship, workshops, eating together and finding new friends. This time the "epic telling" is an evening with the Gospel of Mark. For more information, go to www.nobs.org or call 800-355-NOBS.—*Dan Longenecker*

Developmental disabilities and mental health

Paul D. Leichty is director of Anabaptist Disabilities Network in Goshen, Ind.

In Everett Thomas' editorial "This Healing Thing" (March 1), he writes that "people with developmental disabilities" are cared for in "Mennonite mental health facilities." This statement represents and reinforces confusion in the minds of many people about the differences between people who have developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome, autism and cerebral palsy and people who have mental illness such as schizophrenia, depression and bipolar disorder.

People with developmental disabilities were either born with or developed in early childhood some condition that limits their ability to think, learn and communicate. Some developmental disabilities have physical disabilities associated with them, leaving people unable to hear, see or walk. (Other physical disabilities are not developmental, as, for example, from a disease or accident.)

Mental illness, on the other hand, usually comes in adolescence or early adulthood as a disruption of thoughts, feelings, moods and behaviors. Most experts today consider mental illness the result of a chemical imbalance or other dysfunction in the brain.

Adults who have a mental illness do not want to be labeled "retarded" when they are actually intelligent. Families do not want their children with developmental disabilities to be labeled "mentally ill" when they have no illness. The stigmas and stereotypes often related to these conditions are bad enough without having them misapplied.

Mental health facilities exist to care for people with mental illness and offer counseling services for other kinds of difficulties in dealing with emotions. Most operate on a medical model, seeking a cure or rehabilitation similar to what a general hospital or medical center does for people with physical disabilities and illnesses.

There are Mennonite-related organizations that care for people with developmental disabilities. Rather than operating on a medical model, working toward a cure, these organizations accept people with disabilities as they are and provide services that help include them in the life of the community as people of dignity and worth. Some of these organizations provide housing for adults who cannot function in society without support. Some provide meaningful daytime activities and/or vocational options for people who have a hard time entering the competitive job market. These organizations are not mental-health facilities but are usually referred to as "disability service providers."

People with developmental disabilities need medical care and mental-health care just like the rest of us. It is true that some disabilities are more likely to lead to physical and/or mental-health challenges. Yet a careful distinction between conditions is important in order to avoid stereotype labels.

It is only by including all people in our Christian communities, regardless of abilities or labels or sources of their sufferings, that their critical needs become our needs and thus a part of our thinking about the health-care crisis.

Both groups of people are certainly affected by the health-care crisis the editor addresses. For people with developmental disabilities, a major issue is that often they are the least able in our society to advocate for their own needs and thus receive inadequate medical care.

People with mental illness often face the issue of what and how much therapy an insurance plan will cover. While most health plans cover intensive long-term therapies to keep alive people with cancer or heart disease, there is usually a cap on therapies for people with mental illness. Such therapies are often needed to keep these folks alive, also to prevent suicide.

At ADNet (Anabaptist Disabilities Network), we are aware of medical issues that affect people with all types of disabling conditions—physical disabilities, developmental disabilities and mental illness. However, our underlying concern is for the wholeness and well-being of people with disabilities and mental illness and their inclusion in the life of our churches. Both medically-based ministries, such as our Mennonite mental-health facilities, and community-based ministries, such as our Mennonite disability service providers, can be helpful tools toward meeting some basic needs and are thus worthy of our support. Yet it is only by including all people in our Christian communities, regardless of abilities or labels or sources of their sufferings, that their critical needs become our needs and thus a part of our thinking about the health-care crisis. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Charlotte 2005 in stories and photos**

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Great Lakes merger movement 'stalled'

Area conferences don't plan to integrate, but some congregations are interested.

In a modest but clear sign of continued grassroots support for conference integration in the Midwest, a church in the Indiana-Michigan Conference of Mennonite Church USA intends to reach out to several nearby churches in the Central District.

Firman Gingerich, pastor of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., which is part of the Indiana-Michigan Conference, envisions fuller partnerships with churches such as Eighth Street Mennonite, also in Goshen, that could include joint service projects or new church programs.

"The merger that created Mennonite Church USA has not really impacted us at the conference level," Gingerich says. "We're asking, What are we missing? And is there any way we can influence this, encourage it, invite it?"

It's been nearly four years since the collapse of plans to create Mennonite Church USA's largest conference, the proposed Great Lakes Conference. While a majority of delegates from Central District, Illinois and Indiana-Michigan conferences approved the measure at the time, Ohio Conference fell short of the two-thirds vote required for passage. Delegates expressed concerns about the size of the proposed conference and the loss of congregational autonomy.

Tom Kauffman, conference minister in Ohio, says he does not "sense a willingness here in Ohio to revisit the one-conference idea."

That said, Kauffman and other conference leaders point toward ways congregations are crossing conference lines—as with "mission cells," which are local initiatives. In the Lima, Ohio, area, for example, churches across conference lines are developing a ministry for Hispanic immigrants.

"At this point, I am much less hopeful of movement toward merger anytime soon," says Sherm Kauffman, executive conference minister for Indiana-Michigan. "The way we would get there, if it happens, is through congregations being intentional in developing collaborative relationships with congregations of other conferences."

Susan Sommer, administrator for Illinois, says there remains strong support in the state for integration, especially among the churches with dual affiliations, attached to both Illinois and Central District. Though conference leaders are in regular conversation, and Sommer herself retains "a strong wish that there would be one conference," she says, restructuring appears to be "completely stalled."

Speaking for Central District, conference minister Lloyd Miller says the district is "not opposed to being in conversation at the table. We would like to make sure those conversations are wholistic and incorporate the total reality of Central District, not pieces of it."

While most Central District congregations are in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, there are also member congregations in Iowa, Georgia, Missouri and Wisconsin. More recently, Shalom Mennonite in Harrisonburg, Va., applied for membership in Central District.

"We've stayed connected with each other in a pretty healthy way," even though the congregations represented are diverse and have varying views on issues like homosexuality, women in leadership and military service, Miller says.

Any movement toward a greater regional conference would likely need to be driven by congregations, especially those with a single affiliation, he says. "If congregations are insisting that something happens, then of course we will want to pay attention," he says.

In Goshen, Kevin D. Farmwald, a member of the pastoral team at Eighth Street, says the church welcomes a conversation with College Mennonite about joint initiatives. "We don't want conference affiliation to stand in the way of who God calls us to be," he says.

Gingerich notes that in building relationships with Central District, churches in Indiana-Michigan will likely need to move closer to a model of congregational autonomy.

"The mood within our congregation is, Let's walk toward them," he says. "Let's be open to something new. Maybe that looks more like their style of congregational polity."—*Duane Stoltzfus*

At this point, I am much less hopeful of movement toward merger anytime soon.
—Sherm Kauffman

HOPI TRAILS TO YO
Trail Ride for
Hopi Mission School
Kykotsmovi, AZ

Tara Swartzendruber

Hair ye, hair ye: Give to Hopi Mission School

Bible school students at Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb., shave the head of Jeff Selzer, youth pastor at the congregation, as part of a fund-raiser for Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz. They raised $4,800 during the week of Bible school June 6-10.

Mennonites reach out to immigrants

Congregations, conferences use statement to help welcome 'strangers.'

Nina Lanctot came to the Florence Church of the Brethren-Mennonite Church in Constantine, Mich., expecting to find a low-key pastorate in the small community. Instead she's felt the intense cutting edge of what it means to welcome strangers as brothers and sisters in God's family.

Since Lanctot arrived in January to pastor the 50-member church, the congregation has faced three different issues regarding immigrants. Those incidents include sustaining their relationship with an abused Mexican woman and her daughters as they find safety and work and supporting two African immigrants—from Congo and South Africa—in the challenges of independent living.

Despite nonstop needs, Lanctot says she's found guides for handling them through resources created by Mennonite Church USA: in a statement approved by Atlanta 2003 delegates regarding how to deal justly with immigrants and in congregational resources called "Strangers No More."

Lanctot's congregation is just one example of many. "I came to this little church in the middle of cornfields not expecting to face issues usually found in larger urban areas," Nina says. "I was so grateful for Atlanta, where we talked about these issues and received a statement that helps focus some action."

Immigration is everybody's agenda, and it behooves us all to realize that how we treat the least of these is how we are treating Jesus.—Jeff Wright

The statement reads in part: "As Christians, we are called to welcome the sojourners in our congregations and communities, especially when our government creates increasingly harsh immigration laws in the name of fighting terrorism. ...We reject our country's mistreatment of immigrants, repent of our silence and commit ourselves to act with and on behalf of our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of their legal status."

Lanctot is also grateful for how openly her congregation applies this statement. About one-third of the congregation speaks Spanish, many have served around the world for such organizations as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and others have helped with legal advocacy. "Because of their exposure, they have empathy for foreigners," she says.

The congregation helped heal some of the emotional and economic trauma of the woman and her daughters. In turn, the woman's testimony has strengthened the congregation spiritually. "She's told us how our welcome has helped turn her life around, once so full of death and darkness and loneliness," Lanctot says. "But now she has a church, a home, a family. Her story shows us how God transforms death into life. Her courage and faith inspire ours."

Immigration everybody's issue: The Florence experience proves that immigration is not strictly an urban concern. Jeff Wright, an area minister for the ethnically diverse Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference, says, "This is not a Los Angeles problem, and it's not even an urban problem or just a Hispanic issue. It's everybody's agenda, and it behooves us all to realize that how we treat the least of these is how we are treating Jesus.

"We will all be judged by God regarding how we deal with our sins of racism. How we deal with immigrants is the acid test for the church."

Wright, director of strategic projects for the Center for Anabaptist Leadership in Pasadena, says about 30 percent of the people in Los Angeles County are new immigrants from around the world.

The Atlanta statement helped Wright witness to a Hispanic union leader at a press conference. "When I showed him the statement on immigration, this really tough guy got tears in his eyes and asked, 'Do you people really believe this stuff?'" Wright says. "I nodded yes, and he gave me a big hug and said, 'If that's what the church believes, then I'm ready to go back to church.'"

Low-German-speaking Mennonites come to Western Kansas: Other area conferences are also addressing immigration, including Western District Conference. Estimates show about 5,000 Low German-speaking Mennonites from Mexico are in Kansas. In recent years they are employed as farm workers and at feedlots working with livestock. The people are part of a religious group that stays separate from society and observes strict rules, including educating their own children.

Western District's peace and justice committee has a subcommittee—the Low German Mennonites from Mexico Support Committee—that reaches out to Low-German-speaking people through interpretation and connecting them with health and community services. Committee members such as Tina Block Ediger, secretary of the 11-member subcommittee, work with staff from the Kansas Statewide Farm Worker Health Program.

The subcommittee raises funds and writes grants. The state and federal funds are administered by the health program. Ediger, a member of Bethel College Mennonite Church in North Newton, Kan., and secretary of the subcommittee, interprets during doctor visits. She and Gerhard

Daniel Cifuentes (left), formerly a coffee farmer in Chiapas, Mexico, shows coffee beans to Ron Byler, associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

and Rosemary Reimer conducted a health needs survey for the Kansas State Farm Worker Health Program in 2003.

"The survey revealed needs in the areas of literacy, family planning and health issues," Ediger says. "That's where the denomination's concern for treating immigrants justly is a guide for showing compassion. We tell them we are here to learn to understand your way of life. The best way for us to reach out to them is … to listen with our hearts."

Immigration crosses denominational borders: Following Atlanta 2003, Bethel College Church used the statement and resources for a Wednesday night study session and in preparation for two joint sessions with a local Catholic church in Newton, Our Lady of Guadalupe. It includes several generations of Latin American immigrants.

The first session featured storytelling by immigrants from both congregations, says Heidi Regier Kreider, lead pastor at Bethel College Church. "We heard eye-opening stories about the amazing persistence and long-suffering of immigrants in their struggle to gain legal status and to make this country their home."

In the second session, participants heard presentations from a local senator and several other people involved in advocacy for immigrants, she says. They spoke about current issues and legislation, with suggestions for action and advocacy.

"In the process of preparing these sessions, we discovered a lot of common ground with the Catholics in terms of how we believe we must relate to marginalized people in just ways," Regier Kreider says.

CPT crosses borders: Ron Byler, associate executive director of Mennonite Church USA, saw how the broader church is dealing with immigrants in just ways when in late May he visited a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) unit on the border between Douglas, Ariz., and Agua Prieta, Mexico.

"CPT doesn't only treat symptoms of language and economic problems but also treats the root causes, such as racism and fear in our country," Byler says. "The team's job is to get in the way of the forces of injustice. One way they symbolically are doing that is painting white crosses on the border wall to remember the migrants who have died there after crossing the desert.

"Even though it could get CPT workers in trouble with the local border patrol, they are doing it anyway. It's gratifying to me to see how our immigration statement is being turned into actions that make a difference in our world, even when those actions come with a price."

Atlanta inspires task force: Following Atlanta, congregations in Central District and Indiana-Michigan conferences also felt an urgency to put the immigration statement into action. Representatives from some congregations formed a task force that led to recommended action steps.

The recommendations include learning about local immigration realities, making connections with immigrants through advocacy and reform and building relationships with congregations and individuals from different racial/ethnic groups. This could include planning joint worship services using both Spanish and English, sponsoring joint youth group or vacation Bible school events, participating in cross-cultural study circles, organizing a summer block party in diverse neighborhoods and volunteering at places that serve new immigrants.

The best way for us to reach out to them is … to listen with our hearts.—Tina Block Ediger

Many of these congregations serve people in Elkhart County, Ind., where the Hispanic population is growing quickly, says Lois Hess Nafziger, justice educator-advocate for MCC Great Lakes. Hispanics comprise one-fourth of the population of Goshen, Ind., she says.

"We want to find ways to make a difference and put a dent in some of the issues that globalization and our country's trade policies are creating," Hess Nafziger says. "We must understand that many of these immigrants, if they had a choice, would not leave their loved ones and their homes to come to a strange land. But they can no longer get fair prices for their crops and cannot feed their families. Survival is driving them to us, and God calls us to welcome them."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service*

Siberian exiles return to Mennonite faith

After a lifetime without a church nearby, three are baptized in Germany.

Three heads bowed as pastor Jake Unrau poured baptismal water over salt-and-pepper hair. After living a lifetime without a church nearby, these Siberian exiles were finally home in the Mennonite Church.

On May 29, Armin and Anna (Schmidt) Isaak, both 72, and Maria (Boschmann) Unruh, 65, were baptized at the Christliche Glaubensgemeinschaft (Evangelical Mennonite Church) in Niedergöersdorf, Germany.

Born in 1933 in a time when Ukranian Mennonites were being persecuted, Armin and Anna were just 8 years old when the Isaak and Schmidt families were sent to Siberia. The region's isolated reputation applied to religion as well as geography.

"There were other Mennonite families in Siberia but all far away from where we lived," said Armin Isaak. "The churches were all closed, and some people would meet from house to house in small groups and at different times. It was strongly forbidden to talk about God, and if the police found out there was a gathering in any home, they would go there, break the door in, break up the meeting and chase the people away."

With God's protection, the Isaaks survived Siberia and returned to Ukraine but did not find a meaningful faith until God brought them to Germany in March 2003.

I have found a home here, and not just a place to live, but fellowship with a group of people. —Maria Unruh

Maria Unruh also came to Germany in 2003. Born in Siberia, she moved with her husband to Kazakhstan at age 24. Following his death and a son's motorcycle accident, Unruh began to save money to move to Germany. There she hoped to find better medical treatment for her son and was determined to find a church nearby, rare in Siberia.

"I was not really looking for a church when we came here and did not even think about getting baptized, but because we kept coming to church we learned we should get baptized," Armin Isaak said. "I now believe strongly and want to hold onto my faith. For me, the change has all been from inside."

This is the first time in their lives that any of the three have been able to attend church regularly.

"My mother was devout and talked about God, but ... my father did not want Mother to teach us about God because it just made life harder than it already was," Armin Isaak said.

Jake Unrau, who with his wife, Dorothy, has worked in Europe through Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness since 1998, said the effects of active atheistic emphasis in the schools and at the root of communistic propaganda have left their mark even on families like the Isaaks, Unruhs and Schmidts, who had a sense of faith in God and wanted to pass that on to their children.

Courtesy photo

Baptized: Front, from left, Armin and Anna Isaak and Maria Unruh have found a spiritual home in the Mennonite Church. In back are Jake and Dorothy Unrau.

After the communists killed Anna Isaak's father, life for her mother and siblings was difficult, but her mother took the risk of attending church meetings in homes. Her mother taught her to sing and pray, but she had no access to a Bible because she never learned to read.

"Where we lived in Ukraine there was only an Orthodox church, and later the Jehovah's Witnesses came around, but we did not go there because we knew that was not our faith," Anna Isaak said.

Because Unruh and the Isaaks were unable to attend church in Siberia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, it was difficult to pass their faith to their children. Now adults, their children question what their baptisms and faith mean.

"We want to pray for them and help them grow in their Christian walk. [We] also pray that their children will come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord," said Dorothy Unrau.

Like Unruh, Anna Isaak knew that when they came to Germany she would try to find a church. While waiting for their immigration papers to go through, the Isaaks and Unruh lived at the Aussiedler Heim (Newcomers Home), a government-run home for immigrants with German ancestry, where the three met Mennonite workers who invited them to Christliche Glaubensgemeinschaft.

"They quietly sat and listened for a long time. Then, after a baptism in November of last year, Anna said she wanted to be baptized," Jake Unrau said. After meeting together for several months to discuss what it meant to be baptized, the three repented and on May 29 made a public faith statement in the Mennonite Church.

"I have found a home here, and not just a place to live, but fellowship with a group of people," Maria Unruh said.—*Bethany Keener with reporting by Jake and Dorothy Unrau*

English professor Anna Juhnke dies at 65

She taught 30 years at Bethel College, served overseas and advocated for women.

Anna Kreider Juhnke, a former professor of English at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and known for her advocacy of women in the church and academia, died June 17 at her home after a long battle with cancer. She was 65.

Juhnke served on the Bethel faculty from 1966 to 1996 and had dealt with cancer since 1982. She became the first female chair of the Bethel faculty in 1985.

Bethel English professor Ami Regier of Wichita, Kan., a former student of Juhnke's, remembered Juhnke for the encouragement she gave to other women on the faculty and to female students.

"She was an important role model for many women," Regier says. "In that sense, she does represent an era of change in higher education when few women were leaders and were able to create significant change."

Juhnke and her husband, Jim, a retired history professor at Bethel, were active in overseas service. In the early 1970s, they served in Botswana with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). In 1987-88, they taught English in Chengdu, China, with China Educational Exchange.

Juhnke served on the executive committee of the MCC U.S. board, which she chaired for three years, and for 12 years on the General Conference Mennonite Church's General Board. She also was active with Mennonite World Conference and was a plenary speaker at the MWC assembly in Wichita in 1978.

Anna Juhnke

Juhnke credited her mother, Rachel Kreider, for inspiring her interest in expanding women's roles in the church. "My mother … was my first model and mentor for women in church leadership," Juhnke wrote in 1999. "Although I had never seen a woman pastor, Mom was pastoring every Sunday after the worship service—greeting new people and thinking of ways they could be integrated into the action, inquiring about griefs and joys, encouraging people of all ages."

Born May 11, 1940, in Newton, Kan., the daughter of Leonard and Rachel Kreider, Juhnke graduated from Bluffton (Ohio) College and earned a master's and doctoral degrees in English literature at Indiana University. She attended Bethel for a year.

Juhnke and her husband married Aug. 31, 1963, at Wadsworth, Ohio.

Survivors include her husband; a son, Karl Juhnke of Minneapolis; a daughter, Joanne Juhnke of Madison, Wis.; her mother of Goshen, Ind.; a brother, Emil Kreider of Beloit, Wis; and two grandchildren.

A memorial service was held July 2 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, where Juhnke was a member.—*Robert Rhodes of Mennonite Weekly Review*

> She was an important role model for many women.
> —Ami Regier

Jim Bishop

Bach Festival at EMU turns 13

Kenneth J. Nafziger conducts the Bach Festival orchestra, chorus and soloists Lesley Andrew, Heidi Kurtz, Kenneth Gayle and Daniel Lichti in performing Beethoven's "Symphony No. 9 in D Minor" the evening of June 18 to a full house in Eastern Mennonite University's Lehman Auditorium. This was the 13th Bach festival at EMU.

Fishing boats give Somalis new start

Residents of the town of Adele, Somalia, receive fishing boats at a distribution sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee in response to the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami. The $52,000 project was carried out by a partner organization, SAACID, and provided boats and fishing equipment to 46 households and a month's supply of food to 100 households. —*MCC*

Photo provided by SAACID

Japanese visitor studies Mennonites

Project explores how church members' faith relates to their daily work.

Back in her native Japan, Tomomi Naka didn't know much about Mennonites. But a year in Ohio changed that.

As an undergraduate she spent a year at The College of Wooster in Wayne County, where she encountered various types of Mennonites and Amish. She was intrigued by their diversity of clothing styles and modes of transportation.

"I was curious," she says, "so I took a class on the Amish and started reading about them."

Naka then chose to pursue graduate studies at the University of Iowa, working toward a doctorate in sociocultural anthropology. She further nourished her interest in Mennonites by attending First Mennonite Church in Iowa City. Several people there helped her develop a dissertation project on Mennonite faith and work.

My goal is to explore church members' daily economic and work experience in relation to their faith.
—Tomomi Naka

Currently she is living in Lancaster, Pa., while doing field work for her dissertation among members of a Lancaster Conference congregation and an Atlantic Coast Conference congregation and a few other conservative Mennonite groups. She attends services and Sunday school classes, asks questions afterward and participates in activities of Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

Tomomi Naka

"My goal of this project is to explore church members' daily economic and work experience in relation to their faith," she says.

She is researching how members' economic practices and faith intertwine in everyday situations, how work-related decisions relate to religious values and how members handle and share daily challenges with family and church friends.

Naka says people have been cooperative in sharing about their workplace activities, such as how they try to offer help when a coworker is struggling. "People in the church are very understanding and open," she says. "They are kind enough to give me an opportunity to learn."

She has found it meaningful to hear stories of life and work. "Many people have such rich experiences," she says.

Unfortunately some don't get to hear these stories despite being in the same church week after week. One constraint may be that there are few formal mechanisms to share such experiences.

Naka, whose own background is Buddhist, hopes to find a teaching job in Japan after completing her doctorate.—*The Marketplace*

Cookbook promotes local, seasonal food

Authors explore the impact our food has on our local and global neighbors.

Courtesy photo

athy Passmore

Mary Beth Lind (left) and Cathleen Hockman Wert, authors of *Simply in Season*

Not so long ago most fresh food on North American tables came from home gardens and local farmers' markets. Today the average item of food travels more than 1,000 miles before it lands on our tables. This system is a remarkable technological accomplishment but has not proven to be healthy for our communities, our land or us.

Through stories and simple "whole foods" recipes, *Simply in Season*, a new Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) cookbook from Herald Press, explores how the food we put on our tables impacts our local and global neighbors. The cookbook shows the importance of eating local, seasonal food and invites readers to make choices that offer security and health for our communities, land, bodies and spirit.

Today most of us make little connection with the season and the origin of the food we eat. Written in the spirit of MCC's first cookbook, *More with Less, Simply in Season* makes this connection by featuring the use of local, seasonal foods in wholesome, delicious dishes.

The cookbook authors, Mary Beth Lind of West Virginia and Cathleen Hockman Wert of Oregon, spent nearly two years gathering more than 1,600 recipes from some 450 contributors across Canada and the United States.

The 352-page, full-color cookbook offers 307 recipes for spring, summer, fall, winter and "all seasons." It also features a colorful fruit and vegetable guide to assist readers in learning about the selection, storage, handling, preparation and serving of fresh fruits and vegetables featured in the recipes.

Simply in Season is the third cookbook in the MCC World Community Cookbook Series. The two previous cookbooks, *More with Less* and *Extending the Table*, offer unique recipes and writings to assist readers in raising awareness about world food issues and the interconnectedness of our global community.

Simply in Season is available from your local bookstore or online bookseller for $13.99 in paper or $19.99 for a plastic comb edition. For more information go to www.heraldpress.com or www.simplyinseason.org or call 800-245-7894.—*MCC*

The inspiration for the *Simply in Season* cookbook has been the publishing phenomenon called *More-with-Less*, released in 1976. The *More-with-Less* cookbook by Doris Janzen Longacre stands as the measure of Mennonite Central Committee's World Community Cookbooks, which combine Christian conscience and world food concerns with healthy nutrition and simplicity.

More-with-Less caught the spirit of people who were internationally aware and who were looking for positive and healthy alternatives to artificial fats, sweeteners and obesity. The cookbook has gone through 51 printings and has over 900,000 copies in print; it remains one of Herald Press' best selling titles every year.—*MCC*

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CALENDAR

Birch Grove Mennonite Church, Port Allegany, Pa., ***50th anniversary celebration***, Aug. 6-7. Saturday evening meal at 5 p.m. followed by memories. Sunday breakfast 9 a.m. followed by worship at 10:30 a.m. For further information contact 814-642-9401 or email jflapp@usachoice.net.

Values-Based Leadership Program, two-session event, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. First session "Leading from the Inside" takes place Sept. 19-21, 2005. Second session, "Leading and Empowering Others," is scheduled for Feb. 15-17, 2006. Sponsored by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, MHS Alliance, MMA and Schmucker Training and Consulting. For more information call 800-839-1021 or 724-423-2056, email IAL@Laurelville.org or visit the Web site www.laurelville.org/IAL.

WORKERS

Bontrager, Ken, ended May 1 as pastor at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Gustafson-Zook, Gwen, ended June 30 as pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Linsenmeyer, Dean, was installed June 5 as pastor at North Goshen (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bontreger, Olivia Paige, June 4, to Myron and Fran Poling Bontreger, Goshen, Ind.

Conrad, MaKenna Lynne, April 27, to Nathan and Janet Thome Conrad, Wayland, Iowa.

Graber, Cody Lee, May 19, to Tim and Lisa Schmidt Graber, Wayland, Iowa.

Holsopple, Luke David, June 10, to Joel and Sarah Freed Holsopple, Goshen, Ind.

Johnson, Atticus Paul, June 6, to Brandon and Denise Cunningham Johnson, Albuquerque, N.M.

Johnson, Neil Patrick Gerig, June 14, to Tim Johnson and Nita Gerig, South Bend, Ind.

Keller, Lillian Grace, April 24, to Mike and Tami Klett Keller, Wayland, Iowa.

Martin, Tate Alexander, June 13, to Jeff and Delphine Martin, Lancaster, Pa.

Miller, Corban Azariah, June 8, to Patrick and Emily Miller, Millersburg, Ohio.

Pasqualone, Silas Paul, June 18, to Keith and Yvonne Miller Pasqualone, Elkhart, Ind.

Riley, Kristen Nichole, June 10, to Jaycee and Buffy Wyse Riley, Archbold, Ohio.

Schmucker, Trevor Jace Gunden, May 29, to Scott Schmucker and Lisa Gunden, Houston, Texas.

Wheeler, Sarah Abigail, June 2, to Dave and Jana Goering Wheeler, Osseo, Mich.

Wyse, Praveen, June 4, to Jonathan and Karen Yoder Wyse, West Unity, Ohio.

MARRIAGES

Hall/Roth: Matthew Hall, Benton, Mo., and Amanda Roth, Wayland, Iowa, April 30 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

DEATHS

Correction: In the June 7 issue, Dorothy Lehman's spouse, Lee Lehman, was incorrectly listed as deceased. He still survives.

Beachy, Alma Slabach, 85, Kalona, Iowa, died June 1. Spouse: Henry Beachy. Parents: David and Emma Yoder Slabach. Children: Mary Ellen Litwiller, Emma Simmons, Merle; eight grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Boshart, Loretta Stutzman, 73, Grand Island, Neb., died June 2. Spouse: Amos Boshart Jr. (deceased). Parents: Clarence and Ethel Jantzi Stutzman. Children: John, Jolene, Ann Roth, Robert (deceased); eight grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at Wood River (Neb.) Mennonite Church.

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Brubacher, Emanuel, 90, St. Jacobs, Ont., died June 8. Spouse: Sarah Martin Brubacher. Parents: Josiah and Annie Brubacher. Children: Mark, Jim, Mary Kaiser, Martha Wynn; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 10 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Derksen, Stella, 84, Mountain Lake, Minn., died June 3 of cancer. Parents: John and Helena Derksen. Funeral: June 11 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Epp, Amelia Becker, 77, Henderson, Neb., died June 7. Spouse: Robert O. Epp. Parents: Daniel and Anna Tieszen Becker. Children: Charles, Timothy; six grandchildren. Memorial service: June 10 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Grasse, John Landis, 79, Calico Rock, Ark., died April 16. Spouse: Mary Margaret Miller Grasse. Children: Philip, Nancy, Peggy Russell; six grandchildren. Funeral: April 17 at Calico Rock Mennonite Church.

Hartzler, Buby Gingerich, 84, Albany, Ore., died May 30. Spouse: Clarence Hartzler. Parents: Joseph and Volina Driver Gingerich. Children: Anita Louise Lindberg, C. Kenneth, Dale Edwin; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at Albany Mennonite Church.

Kratz, Alice Halteman, 96, Souderton, Pa., died June 4. Spouse: Raymond L. Kratz (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Sallie Alderfer Halteman. Children: Nevin, Arlan, Vernon, Floyd, Mary; 10 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 12 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

LaVallee, Felicia, 71, Iowa City, Iowa, died May 27 of lung disease. Spouse: Raymond LaVallee (deceased). Children: Jeff, Matt; three step-grandchildren. Funeral: May 30 at First Mennonite Church of Iowa City.

Lehman, Dennis, 85, Kidron, Ohio, died May 31. Spouse: Grace Lehman. Parents: Noah and Mary Lehman. Child: Delbert; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Murcia, Saul, 50, Akron, Pa., died June 9 of chondrosarcoma. Spouse: Rebecca Thatcher Murcia. Parents: Saul and Florinda Murcia. Children: Gabriel, Mario. Funeral: June 13 at Akron Mennonite Church.

Nebel, Clayton, 89, Noble, Iowa, died May 25. Spouse: Edith Rich (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Molly Rof Nebel. Children: Hedru, Dorthy Truman, Betty Hocker, Joan Eubanks, Nadine Giudicessi; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 28 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland, Iowa.

Reichenbach, Kenneth, 79, Bluffton, Ohio, died May 26. Spouse: Shirley Staley Reichenbach (deceased). Parents: Henry L. and Emma Badertscher Reichenbach. Children: Teresa Parlette, Keith, Diane; two grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; one great-grandchild; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 1 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Reynolds, Arthur J., 68, Mt. Zion, Ill., died June 13. Spouse; Lela Reynolds. Parents: Otto and Hazel Sinuard Reynolds. Children: Clark, Darla Kopp; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 16 at Arthur (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Rocke, Jerrold I., 87, Flanagan, Ill., died June 11 of heart failure. Spouse: Edna Roszhart Rocke (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Magdalena Frey Rocke. Children: Jerrianne Bergum, Dirk; six grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 15 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa, Ill.

Rupp, Leory, 73, Wauseon, Ohio, died June 8 of a heart attack. Spouse: Annabelle Schrock Rupp. Parents: Eldon and Lydia Stuckey Rupp. Children: Wesley, Darlene Rufenacht, Keith, Judy York; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 11 at Tedrow Mennonite Church, Wauseon.

Shoemaker, Eda Eigsti, 91, Freeport, Ill., died March 16. Spouse: Eugene Shoemaker (deceased). Parents: Edward and Alma Slagel Eigsti. Children: Alice Badger, Loren, Ivan, Merle, Ron, Jerry, Geneva Swartzentruber, Marilyn Longfellow, Leola; 11 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 19 at Freeport Mennonite Church.

Tisdale, Viola Ann Brydge, 98, Stuarts Draft, Va., died June 4. Spouse: David Tisdale (deceased). Parents: Edward R. and Isabelle Henderson. Memorial service: Lynside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Unruh, Stella Reimer, 87, Moundridge, Kan., died May 26 of cancer. Spouse: Raymond Unruh (deceased). Children: Cal, Wayne, Maggie Kaufman, Debra Schmidt; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 31 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Yoder, William, 83, Columbiana, Ohio, died May 19. Spouse: Elaine Yoder. Children: Thomas, Timothy, Patricia Edwards; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 4 at North Lima (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Yost, Melvin, 78, Westminster, Colo., died June 1. Spouse: Janet Cutrell Yost. Parents: Earvey Megli (E.M.) and Emma Schmidt Yost. Children: Don, Chris Lundberg, Melinda Young, David; nine grandchildren. Funeral: June 5 at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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West Swamp Mennonite Church, an established congregation in Quakertown, Pa., is seeking a ***pastor of youth ministry***. The person in this position will be responsible for planning and leading junior and senior high programs and working with others planning children and young adult activities. For further information contact West Swamp Mennonite Church, 2501 Allentown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951, 215-536-7468; wswamp@enter.net. Rod Rush committee chair and Warren Tyson conference minister.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***associate director for human resources*** to assist with recruitment, placement, training and support for long-term workers, and to design organizational HR policies. Qualifications: education or experience in HR, minimum two consecutive years living overseas. Position begins in September. Contact Jeanette Hess 717-898-2251 or jeanetteh@emm.org by July 15.

Hesston College is accepting applications for the position of ***food services director*** for its highly respected food service operations. This person provides overall strategic and operational planning and management of institutional food services including the dining hall, snackshop and catering operations. This is a full-time position during the school year and half-time during the summer months. The successful candidate will have experience at a management level in quantity food service operations and have demonstrated the ability to lead a team of highly dedicated employees. Familiarity with state food service codes, menu planning, recipe development and food purchasing is important as is familiarity with Hesston College, Mennonite Church USA and its constituents. To apply, send résumé to Human Resources Office, Hesston College, PO Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062 or email to debbiej@hesston.edu. EOE.

Part-time conference minister for **NY Mennonite Conference** beginning October 2006. Conference profile available: http://nymennon.bfn.org/. MLI required. Contact Philip Martin amcpastor@highstream.net, 716-937-0412. Applications accepted through October 2005.

Mennonite Mission Network seeks a ***personnel counselor*** to lead in the processing of up to 120 applicants annually to discern appropriate applicants for Christian Service and other assignments and to assist programs as requested and appropriate. This person must be a discerning listener and a team player who is able to work independently with initiative, decisiveness and good judgment, while collaborating effectively. Cross-cultural mission/service experience will add understanding of qualities important for applicants to have in order to flourish while in service assignments. Ability to travel independently up to 30 nights away from home each year is required. For more information, see Staff Opportunities at www.MennoniteMission.net.

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Meet AAI team member
Rich Gerig, AAI principal

A 30-year career in all aspects of institutional advancement (Goshen College), including development, constituency relations, and enrollment management; specialties in advancement planning and staff mentoring; a master's degree from Arizona State University; at home in Glendale, Arizona.

Other AAI team members include Jerry Kennell, Dan Hess, Pat Swartzendruber, Michael Wiese and Becky Drumm.

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'A Word in Season, How Good It Is!': A Christian Year in Sermons, edited by Thomas Lehman (Rosenberry Books, 2005, $15), and **On All My Holy Mountain: A Modern Fraktur** (Rosenberry Books, 2005, $28) are published by two members of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship. The former book is a collection of sermons by 11 members of the congregation that follow the church year. The latter book combines fraktur, the colorful folk art practiced by Mennonites in past centuries, and reflections on peace by members of Chapel Hill who live at Rutba House, an urban hospitality community in Durham, N.C. Both books are available at the congregation's booth at the Mennonite Church USA assembly at Charlotte, N.C., or from the publisher at www.rosenberrybooks.com or by calling 800-723-0336.

A New and Right Spirit: Creating an Authentic Church in a Consumer Culture by Rick Barger (Alban Institute, 2005, $18) argues for congregations to reexamine what it means to be an "authentic church" in a culture where authenticity is hard to come by.

Build a Better World: Africa is a new children's curriculum from Church World Service (11-99 copies for $1 each). Each of the four sessions features a hope-filled story of an African child assisted through the work of Church World Service, a related Bible study, various hands-on activities and reproducible take-home sheets. To order call 800-297-1516.

Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life by Margarie J. Thompson (Westminster John Knox Press, 2005, $14.95) is a new edition of the 1995 best-seller that offers a framework for understanding the spiritual disciplines and instruction for developing and nurturing those practices.

Subversive Orthodoxy: Outlaws, Revolutionaries and Other Christians in Disguise by Robert Inchausti (Brazos Press, 2005, $19.99) revisits the lives and works of an array of well-known Christian thinkers as well as those not often thought of as Christian, including Walker Percy, Dorothy Day, Jacques Ellul, Søren Kierkegaard, Jack Kerouac, Marshall McLuhan, Ivan Illich and Andy Warhol.

Break Forth into Joy!: Beyond a Consumer Lifestyle and **Let Jesus Come, Let Santa Go** (Alternatives for Simple Living, 2005) are available on audio CD. To order call 800-821-6153, write Alternatives@SimpleLiving.org or visit www.SimpleLiving.org.

Does God Hear My Prayer? by August Gold (SkyLight Paths, 2005, $8.99) and **How Does God Listen?** by Kay Lindahl (SkyLight Paths, 2005, $8.99) address children's questions about God, using a lively conversational format and colorful photos to make the answers accessible.

Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice by Howard Zehr (Herald Press, 2005, $15.99) has been released in a third edition with a new afterword by the author.

The Wet Engine: Exploring the Mad, Wild, Miracle of the Heart by Brian Doyle (Paraclete Press, 2005, $17.95) offers an unusual history of and reflections on the human heart, "the most mysterious thing in the universe."

Passing on the Comfort: The War, the Quilts and the Women Who Made a Difference by An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller (Good Books, 2005, $14.95) is a story of terrible odds, of quilts well-worn from having been called to active duty and of determined women helping other women.

Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality by J. Brent Bill (Paraclete Press, 2005, $17.95) invites readers of all backgrounds to discover silence and other unique gifts of the Quaker way.

Jesus and Politics: Confronting the Powers by Alan Storkey (BakerAcademic, 2005, $24.99) presents a thorough narrative reading of the Gospels, moving into issues of political philosophy, principle and practice.

A New Perspective on Jesus: What the Quest for the Historical Jesus Missed by James D.G. Dunn (BakerAcademic, 2005, $12.99) points out flaws in the past Jesus quests by noting that Jesus made an impact on his first disciples well before his death and resurrection, operated in an oral culture and that the characteristic features of the Jesus tradition reveal the impression Jesus made on his disciples during his mission.

The Knitting Way: A Guide to Spiritual Self-Discovery by Lind Skolnik and Janice MacDaniels (SkyLight Paths, 2005, $16.99) shows how knitting can be an influential activity for all parts of life.

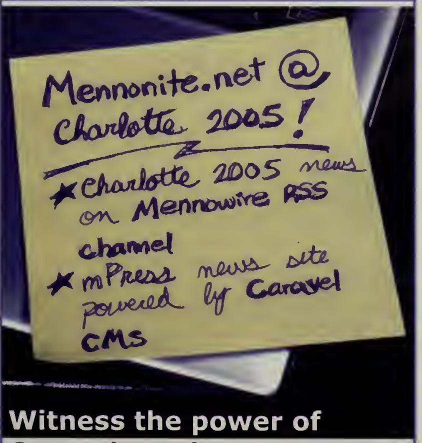
Unsettled Weather: How Do I Forgive? by Wilma Derksen (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) explores how storytelling can become a method and the message of moving toward forgiveness of others.

Getting in the Way: Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams, edited by Tricia Gates Brown (Herald Press, 2005, $17.99), collects first-person narratives by members of Christian Peacemaker Teams from such trouble spots as Haiti, Iraq and Colombia, where CPT works to reduce violence and conflict.

Faith in Action Study Bible: Living God's Word in a Changing World (Zondervan/World Vision, 2005, $31.99) is a New International Version of the Bible with a passage-by-passage commentary that connects those passages to life today.

A Table of Delight: Feasting With God in the Wilderness by Elizabeth J. Canham (Upper Room Books, 2005, $12) invites us to explore the wilderness places in our lives, both the unintended times of barrenness and the chosen "desert times" as opportunities for holy encounter.

The Truce of God by Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2005, $15) is a new edition that speaks anew to the realities of life in a terror-filled world and diagnoses the problem of war in theological terms.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An invitation to study and action

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu.

The U.S. crisis in health-care access is real. Runaway costs and millions of uninsured people are problems that touch every community, including many of our sisters and brothers in the church and many of our neighbors down the street.

As Mennonite Church USA seeks to be a missional church—that is, to participate with what God is doing in the world—inaction on this issue is not an option. It is vital that we add our energy and voice to the growing chorus of faith communities seeking to address injustices in health-care access. (For examples, see: http://uhcan.org/faith/faith_statements/intro.htm and http://covertheuninsuredweek.org/media/docs/release041205a.pdf.)

As avenues of response to this missional call, Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board will recommend several delegate actions during the 2005 Assembly in Charlotte, including an invitation to all member congregations to utilize "Healing Healthcare: A Study and Action Guide on Healthcare Access in the United States" (May 17 issue, page 14).

"Healing Healthcare" is a six-week study produced by the Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics, funded by the Healthcare Access Commission and published by Faith & Life Resources. As indicated by its subtitle, the volume works with a learning model that informs but also calls us toward concrete, practical responses. Aimed at adult Sunday school classes and small groups, "Healing Healthcare" draws together the expertise of people from various disciplines, including biblical studies, church history, ethics, law, medicine and pastoral ministry.

Minimal costs: To encourage its use, the costs of utilizing the study are minimal. While having multiple copies is beneficial, the guide is designed so that an entire group can participate in the study by providing a single copy to the group leader. Moreover, every delegate at the Charlotte Assembly will receive a free copy, with additional copies selling for only $5.99. The guide is also easy to use. Each lesson includes study material for the teacher or group leader, detailed suggestions on leading 50-minute group sessions and a two-sided reproducible handout of session highlights, quotes, Scripture references and conversation starters.

Lesson one, "The Current Situation," written by Karl S. Shelly, co-pastor at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., sets the stage for the study by using statistics and stories to explain the current crisis facing U.S. health care. The major points of this lesson are that the U.S. health-care system suffers from runaway costs, millions of people without proper access to health care and poor performance in key health outcomes such as life expectancy and infant mortality.

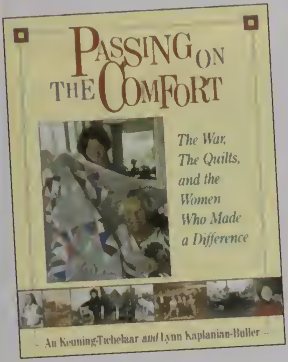
While each lesson includes some Bible study, lessons two and three speak most directly to our Christian convictions. Willard M. Swartley, professor emeritus of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., wrote lesson two, "The Bible and Christian Convictions." This lesson argues that the biblical ideals of shalom and justice, Jesus' healing ministry and the example of the early church teach us to work for health care that is accessible to all. Goshen College history professor John D. Roth wrote lesson three, "The Christian and Anabaptist Legacy in Healthcare," which shows that Anabaptist Christians have a rich history of mutual aid, caring for the sick and the poor, and transformative work in mental health care.

Learning from others: Lessons four and five begin the process of looking for answers to the health-care crisis. As suggested by the lesson title, "Improving Access Locally," week four focuses on local responses. Through numerous examples, nurse and health-care consultant Phyllis J. Miller demonstrates that we can learn from what others are already doing creatively to address local health-care access needs of fellow church members and neighbors. Timothy Stoltzfus Jost, law professor at the Washington and Lee University School of Law, wrote lesson five, "Public Policy." Jost shows we can learn nationally from how other developed countries coordinate health care, all of whom use public insurance programs to do better than the United States in controlling costs and providing access.

Along with editing the study, I wrote lesson six, "What Will We Do? A Call to Action!" This lesson attempts to supplement and synthesize the previous lessons into an invitation to become involved in addressing health-care access. Dale Shenk, Bible teacher at Bethany Christian Schools in Goshen, Ind., developed the helpful teacher's guide and reproducible handout.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, the Healthcare Access Commission and the Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics share the hope that a delegate action in Charlotte encouraging all member congregations to utilize "Healing Healthcare" will further a denomination-wide conversation about and commitment to issues of health-care access.

STORIES *from* WOMEN . . .


PASSING ON THE COMFORT
The War, The Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference
An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller

Passing on the Comfort: *The War, The Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference*

by An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller

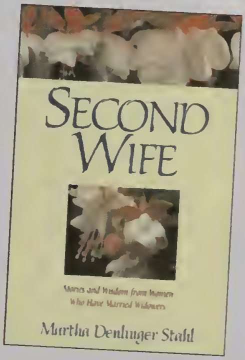
Two women are brought together improbably by a set of worn quilts. And stories of courage and grit.

First there is An in Holland in the early 1940s, fighting to keep the War from taking over her young, promising life.

Lynn comes 20-some years later, showing up in Amsterdam fresh from America in the early '70s, tired of another war. She didn't know An then, but one weekend, Lynn discovers the quilts that survived the War and goes searching for their owner and their stories. She found An and, ultimately, herself. $14.95, paperback

Second Wife: *Stories and Wisdom from Women Who Have Married Widowers*

by Martha Denlinger Stahl


SECOND WIFE
Stories and Wisdom from Women Who Have Married Widowers
Martha Denlinger Stahl

Mid-life romance—how promising! How sweetly appealing! Maybe.

Herself a second wife, Martha Stahl talks straight about the preparation required for those women who are marrying a widower. Because they're older and considered "wiser," such couples tend not to take the care needed for happiness and satisfaction in their marriages.

Stahl married for the first when she was in her late 40s. The marriage turned out well, but it presented her with situations she hadn't imagined before.

The book is full of stories. Many are touched with humor; many are full of spicy wisdom. This book is for anyone contemplating becoming a second wife—or for the children or friends of any such adventurer. $9.99, paperback

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Everett J. Thomas

Listening past the mistakes

People my age are about finding ourselves, and that includes wanting to be forgiven for some of our mistakes while at the same time still being heard for some of our views.—Tonya Keim Bartel

We all have made mistakes—sinned—and need to acknowledge those mistakes and sins. Young adults such as Tonya Keim Bartel ("Young and Older Adults Will Rub Shoulders at Charlotte," May 17) often make mistakes on their way to finding themselves. Her plea focuses a problem: We are often unforgiving about the mistakes of others in the church. This is due to the misguided notion that discipleship means unblemished perfection. But we can all be more generous toward each other, whether young adult or older.

Some 30 years ago I was a young adult suffering through a crisis of faith. As a 26-year-old teaching English in a Mennonite high school, I resigned my position and became a stay-at-home dad because I was no longer sure I accepted what the church had taught me. It was inappropriate and hypocritical to teach teenagers what the church believed while wanting to reject those values in favor of others in the popular culture of the 1970s.

I went searching for answers in a seminary class and began to reconstruct more mature convictions out of shallow juvenile beliefs in subsequent classes. I discovered other 20-somethings at seminary, and together under the bemused guidance of seasoned professors we, too, went about the process of finding ourselves. We also were heard for some of our views.

While young adults may not have the wisdom of their elders, neither do all of us older adults agree about what God wants.

Young adults today ask for this same graciousness in many of our congregations. I recall the pastor of our small congregation inviting me to a donut shop during those difficult years and telling me he saw leadership gifts in me that should be used in the church. That unexpected call, along with opportunities for leadership in the congregation, altered the direction of my life.

As we relate to young adults, what matters most is the direction or trajectory their lives are taking, not some recent mistake that some may find unpardonable. But someone who has been on the path of faithfulness for a short time does not immediately have the same credibility as a person with decades of faithfulness and whose life continually bears the fruits of God's Spirit.

On the other hand, simply being a Christian for years does not automatically make a person wise. Young adults are not the only ones who need to be forgiven for making mistakes. All of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God. None of us can claim to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. Rather, it is the journey toward this perfection that matters. When we fall short of the glory of God, the ways we respond to such shortcomings reveal either repentance or rationalization.

In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, to sin means "to miss the mark." For an arrow to hit its mark, it must follow a perfect trajectory all along the way. If we could stop time at some point along the arrow's path, we would see that the arrow is "perfect."

That is also what it means for us to be perfect. The longer we spend on the path of faithfulness—with the mark being the perfection God asks of us—the more gracious we become for those just beginning the journey but who drift off the trajectory to perfection. To be "perfect" means we embody the same kind of grace and lovingkindness that is God's essence.

Let us respond to young adults and each other—perhaps fresh from significant mistakes—with grace and acceptance because we know how difficult it is to stay on the path.

While young adults may not have the wisdom of their elders, we also know that not all of us older adults agree about what God wants of the church and none of us have reached perfection. We also know that the points of view offered by younger Christians may be fresh inbreakings of God's Spirit into our discernment. We listen to each other and to younger voices even as we know about some recent mistakes. Doing so can help listen to each other, even when we know of the mistakes—and sins—of others.—*ejt*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated July 26 and will be the special issue on Charlotte 2005.

The Mennonite

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July 26, 2005

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tongues set free

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Charlotte 2005 convention issue

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Charlotte 2005 convention issue

Many of our regular features—such as the Grace and Truth column that usually appears on this page—are missing from this issue. Also missing are the Readers Say section, Leadership and Mediaculture columns, and For the Record. That is because once every two years we create a special issue devoted almost entirely to our denomination's biennial convention.

Charlotte 2005 was the ninth gathering for Mennonite Church Canada, which has been meeting annually since its formation in 1997. But this year's convention, held in downtown Charlotte, N.C., was only the second such gathering for Mennonite Church USA.

When the two national bodies were formed, the assumption was that we would meet together in Canada this year. However, those plans changed for two reasons: Mennonite Church USA is still in formation and needed a U.S. location that would allow as many people as possible to attend, and the cost of meeting facilities was much higher in Canada, since July is part of that country's peak tourism season—and convention facilities in this country stand idle during the week of July 4.

A record 8,677 participants gathered for Charlotte 2005 July 4-9. About 10 percent of registrants were members of Mennonite Church Canada, including 207 delegates—just enough for a quorum in Mennonite Church Canada business sessions (see page 15).

Although the Youth Convention (page 18) was the largest of the four conventions (adult, youth, junior youth and children) many of those participants were young adult and adult sponsors. That fact altered perceptions for Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board on July 4 when a staff member noted that there were as many adults in the youth convention as in the adult convention.

As usual, this biennial gathering had many layers; no two participants would have the same experience. While daily worship services provided a central rhythm for the week, congregational and conference representatives to Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA delegate assemblies spent most of their time in separate sessions (pages 10-15).

Youth convention participants, however, had two worship sessions each day and then spent time in small groups reflecting on those experiences, or they flooded a large hall where recreation activities allowed for interaction among youth groups from both countries.

Charlotte 2005
By the numbers:

8,677 registrants
MC Canada: 802
MC USA: 7,875
5,238 youth/sponsors
2,669 adults
506 children
264 volunteers

The exhibit hall included creative displays and lots of giveaways—especially from Mennonite colleges. Again this year—as at Atlanta 2003—the biggest prize was a Volkswagen given away by Hesston (Kan.) College (page 5).

But the central theme of the event, "Can't Keep Quiet," continually reminded all present of the purpose of such a gathering: to become even more outspoken about our faith. If this five-day event sets loose our tongues even a little, then it will have served to make us more missional as a church—in both Canada and the United States.

It is unclear whether there will be another binational convention that includes joint delegate assemblies meeting in the same venue as the youth convention. While Canadian and U.S. delegates met together (page 14) to talk about the relationship between the two-country churches, Mennonite Church USA will hold its next convention alone in 2007 in San Jose, Calif.—*Editors*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Mennonite Church USA conventions should:

- ○ Continue to meet every two years (53%)
- ○ Meet every three years (22%)
- ○ Meet every four years (18%)
- ○ Not sure (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

TheMennonite

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IN BRIEF

Samuel Lopez elected to Executive Board

Mennonite Church USA delegates elected Samuel Lopez, New Holland, Pa., to the Executive Board, representing Iglesia Menonita Hispana. Lopez, moderator-elect of IMH, became moderator when Byron Pellecer resigned.

Rejected Mennonite reality shows

Each issue of *mPress* at Charlotte 2005 included a top 10 list. Saturday's focused on rejected suggestions for Mennonite reality shows:

10. *Faspa* Factor
9. Delegates Gone Wild: What will they pass next?
8. Fear Factor: Martyr Edition
7. Samaritan Idol: Watch as Mennos race to fix a fence
6. Iron Chef: Mennonite Potluck
5. The (Really) Simple Life
4. Pimp My Buggy
3. Trading Pastors
2. The Weakest Shenk
1. Menno Eye for the Military Guy.

—*mPress*

'We' are Mennonite Church USA

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership passed out buttons in delegate sessions with the word "*We*" on them as a way of introducing a new campaign to build identity for the young denomination.

"Research reveals a clear relationship between members' sense of denominational identity and their support of and active involvement in ministries in their congregations, area conferences and church-wide agencies," said a statement. "Over the next several years, Mennonite Church USA is embarking on a journey ... of building a strong, cohesive, unified identity among members and leaders. ... We are Mennonite Church USA."

According to the statement, the new identity campaign was launched because members and leaders say they don't know what Mennonite Church USA stands for, are confused by complicated organizational structures and don't know what missional means.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Delegates debate bylaw changes

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Delegates at Charlotte 2005 adopted bylaw changes. However, one of those changes encountered opposition.

The change in question concerned *The Mennonite*, specifically its relationship to the Executive Board (see May 17, page 32 for the proposed changes).

Doug Kaufman, pastor of Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., came to the microphone and said, "If we think both leadership and the constituency is better served by an independent magazine, we should oppose these bylaws."

Paul Rohrer, Orrville, Ohio, on the other hand, urged support of the bylaws. He said *The Mennonite* should support official policy.

Malinda Berry, New York City, agreed with Kaufman. A corporate ethos is uncomfortable with an independent journal, she said.

Gerald Biesecker-Mast, a member of The Mennonite, Inc. board explained that the bylaws say *The Mennonite* should "support the church's mission but be able to critique the church and provide a prophetic voice."

After a ballot vote, the bylaw changes passed with an 83 percent majority.—*Gordon Houser*

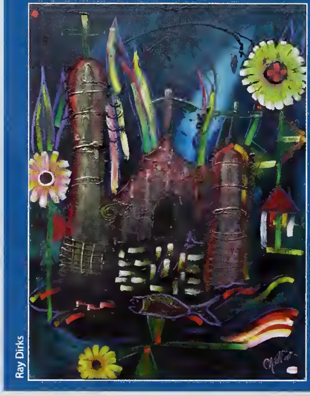
Whose land is it anyway?

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Europeans encountered the Catawba living in this region in 1566. A settler began Charlotte in 1755 with a house at an intersection of Catawba paths two blocks from the convention center where Mennonites met July 4-9.

In 1760 the Catawba ceded to the colonial government all their lands except for 225 square miles along the Catawba River about 20 miles south of Charlotte. Nevertheless, White colonists encroached on Catawba land.

Banned in the USA

U.S. Customs did not let curator Ray Dirks of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg bring three Cuban paintings to Charlotte 2005. They were part of the exhibit "In God's Image: A Global Anabaptist Family," featuring more than 100 works from 17 countries. At left is one of the offending paintings, a joyous image of the Havana Cathedral by Cheleni. Dirks says, "It seems ironic that the Bush administration, one that likes to tell people it is led by God more than any other, would squelch this opportunity to support Christians in a Communist land." —*MHC Gallery*



Ray Dirks

HARLOTTE 2005
Can't Keep Quiet!

Laurie L. Oswald

Prayers and messages for Zimbabwe

During Wednesday's morning worship at Charlotte 2005, worshipers wrote prayers and messages to their faith family suffering in Zimbabwe (see July 5, page 6). Janeen Bertsche Johnson (left), a member of Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board, hands the written messages to Mennonite World Conference president Nancy Heisey, who will give them to Danisa Ndlovu, MWC vice president and bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe, at MWC Executive Committee meetings next month.

In 1840 the tribe sold what remained of the reservation to the State of South Carolina, which agreed to obtain new territory for them in North Carolina, which refused to part with any land for that purpose. A reservation of about one square mile was set aside for them in South Carolina.

About 1,200 Catawba descendants live on or near the reservation near Rock Hill, S.C. Tribal membership is 2,600.—*Rich Meyer, CPT*

Galen Johns keeps convention streak alive

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Galen Johns kept his convention streak alive. He has attended every Mennonite Church (MC) and Mennonite Church USA convention for the past 54 years, having begun his streak in Goshen in 1951. Charlotte is No. 27.

Johns attended each convention—whether it meant staying in a pop-up tent, a camper, a college dorm or a hotel. In Atlanta he slept in the camper he and his wife purchased years earlier. Since then he sold it and stayed this year at the Holiday Inn.

Remembering the church in 1951, he said, "We [Mennonites] had a mindset of 'we' and 'they' and we were separated from the world, being rural agricultural people. … With the second world war, things changed because young men saw the needs of our country and other countries. So our denomination was no longer a subcultural group, because we started relating more to society."

Johns said he sat in on the delegate sessions to try to see where the Mennonite Church is going. "I personally enjoy the decision-making process and seeing directions [delegates] take," he said.

Now at age 85, Johns said, the delegates may have to carry on without him. "I hadn't planned on attending the convention in San Jose."—*Zach Miller for* mPress

There's power in the blood

American Red Cross staffer Brenda McCain, right, draws blood donated by Allen Maddux of Marion, Kan., on July 6. Mennonites at Charlotte donated more than 300 pints of blood but fell short of the goal of 400.—*mPress*

Hesston College
Hesston College
START HERE. GO EVERYWHERE

Brian Schlabach

If the key fits . . .

Amanda Yoder, 17, a senior at Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind., on Friday, July 8, started the 1973 Volkswagen convertible bug (above) that Hesston (Kan.) College offered as a grand prize. However, Yoder, chose the $3,000 cash prize instead. Yoder and the 39 other final contestants entered the number-matching game by finding another person who had the same number. Then 10 daily winners drawn July 5-8 advanced to the final round. Each received a key to try to start the car. Yoder says she has "pretty much" decided to attend Hesston College a year from now. She is a member of East Goshen Mennonite Church in Goshen.—*Hesston College*

MMA addresses questions about COMB

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—Charlotte 2005 participants had several opportunities to meet with representatives of Mennonite Church USA agencies and lodge their concerns. At MMA's session on July 5, the first questions were about COMB (Covenant Mutual Benefits Plan), the health-care plan owned by Mennonite Church USA for pastors in Mennonite congregations.

"The issue is whether COMB can maintain enough interest in [Mennonite Church USA congregations]," said MMA vice president Steve Garboden. "It looks like congregations that are employing people who are healthy need to resist the temptation to go on the market and find a cheaper plan and stay in COMB."

Garboden noted that the pricing for COMB policies is "comparable to other small employee groups," but those policies are generally more expensive than larger plans in the secular market. Garboden told the group that membership in all MMA's health plans is up slightly over five years. As of May, 263 congregations in Mennonite Church USA participate in the COMB plan for their pastors.—*Everett J. Thomas*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Offerings total $58,000-plus

Worshipers at Charlotte 2005 gave more than $58,000 in three different offerings. One at the youth convention collected $30,800 for China Educational Exchange. One adult offering collected more than $17,000 toward work in China; another collected $11,800 toward church-planting in North Carolina.

Brenneman honored for MMA leadership

On July 5, Charlotte 2005 participants honored Howard L. Brenneman, who retires at the end of this month after 14 years as president of MMA, the stewardship agency of Mennonite Church USA. During his tenure he helped the organization refocus its mission on Christian stewardship, particularly emphasizing that stewardship is holistic and not related only to money. "Howard brought together the best of business and the best of church," said Carol Suter, chair of the MMA board of directors.—*mPress*

Tongues

Participants at the Charlotte 2005 adult worship sessions pray.

set free

Mennonites at Charlotte 2005 get loud, anointed with power.

by Gordon Houser

Long known as the quiet in the land, Mennonites at Charlotte 2005 sought to break out of that moniker by focusing on the theme "Can't Keep Quiet," taken from Acts 4:20. While the adult worship sessions at Charlotte had their quiet, reflective moments, they also had moments of lively singing, hand-clapping and even some dancing.

Speakers at these worship sessions, which included participants from both Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, addressed themes drawn from stories in the book of Acts. At the opening worship on Monday evening, July 4, Lori Vincent told about her six-year struggle with a rare form of cancer and the healing she has experienced. She said she learned that healing comes in many forms and that death can be a healing.

Michele Hershberger, chair of the Bible department at Hesston (Kan.) College, followed with a sermon on "Walking and Leaping and Praising God." She asked why miracles happen sometimes when we pray and not at other times. "I don't have the answers," she said, but wondered, "Would I leap more if I experienced persecution?"

She told of hearing from Jesus that we are not Peter and John in the story of the healing of the lame man (Acts 3:1-10) but the beggar. "You are broken like the lame man on the side of the road," Jesus says to us. While this hurts our pride in helping others, Hershberger said, it is really good news, since the beggar didn't do anything to deserve a miracle.

God is going to bring us new life—even if we expect less, Hershberger said. "How can you walk and leap when you're so busy being responsible?" In the midst of seeming failure there is much hope, because the power is in Jesus' name, not ours.

Beggars know their need, Hershberger said, then quoted Henri Nouwen: "Nothing conflicts with the love of Christ like service to God."

How can you walk and leap when you're so busy being responsible?—Michele Hershberger

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

The central issue facing Mennonites in North America [is] Christology. —J. Nelson Kraybill

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in you. —Peter Stucky

To sing your song will take courage and incredible risk. —Merv Stoltzfus

Faith is more than just believing; it is trusting.—Barbara Moses

Tuesday morning, July 5: J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., called on Mennonites not only to make peace but to name the Peacemaker. His sermon followed a dramatic interpretation of Acts 4:13-21 by the comedy duo Ted and Lee, dressed in British robes and wigs to judge Peter and John for healing a man "by the power of Jesus."

Kraybill called Christology "the central issue facing Mennonites in North America." One pressure is to stop talking about Jesus because of sensitivity to other religions. The other pressure is to choose a civil religion that talks about Jesus but takes part in society's consumerism and militarism.

He told of a Dutch Mennonite who said, reflecting on the loss of members there, "We kept the deeds but lost the words."

At a Hispanic Mennonite church in Oregon Kraybill heard from an ordinary man how he shared his faith in Christ with others at a factory where he works. Kraybill may not share his faith like that man, he said, but "I like the way he does evangelism better than the way I don't."

He prayed for God to "give us words to say who we are."

Wednesday morning, July 6: Peter Stucky, a pastor and president of the Colombian Mennonite Church, focusing on Acts 4:1-12, said the kingdom of this world tries to overcome the kingdom of God, either by force or by seduction. However, "the kingdom of this world is finished."

He told stories of church members in Colombia facing kidnappings, torture, executions and death threats from groups legal and illegal. But these believers "carry on with the power of Jesus."

Some 70 church leaders have been killed in Colombia in the past year, Stucky said. Eight people in a community that declared itself "a peace community" were killed by the army, yet the U.S. government continues to substantiate Colombia's human rights record and give it military aid only less than what it gives Israel and Egypt.

Nevertheless, Jesus has overcome the world and given the church that authority. "The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in you," Stucky said. The Colombian Mennonite Church has located its ministries among the poor and marginalized. They speak with guerrillas and army representatives in the name of Jesus.

Later in the service, Dan Nighswander of Mennonite Church Canada and Jim Schrag of Mennonite Church USA offered blessings to the Colombian Mennonite Church. Stucky responded in kind, saying that because of North American wealth and power "it is hard to remain faithful … maybe harder than it is for us in Colombia."

Wednesday evening, July 6: In a joint worship service of youth and adults, Merv Stoltzfus, conference minister for Atlantic Coast Conference, told of being hit by a drunk driver when he was 11 years old. Later, God called him against his inclinations to go to college. This led him to other important choices. God knows all our possibilities, he said.

He referred to the story of an East African tribe in which each person has his or her own song. "To sing your song will take courage and incredible risk," he said. Such risk is worth it, however. John 10:10 promises life in abundance.

Stoltzfus then invited listeners to come forward and choose to sing their song and follow God.

Thursday morning, July 7: Barbara Moses told the story of how God called her to be the principal of Philadelphia Mennonite High School (PMHS). Four years ago the school faced a financial crisis when they discovered asbestos in the building they had just purchased. Now in its seventh year, the school is doing well, thanks to help from the broader Mennonite church.

She spoke of moving from being a wimp to being a witness. "Faith is more than just believing; it is trusting," Moses said. She did not want to become PMHS's first principal, which meant earn-

Everett J. Thomas

Prayers: Charlotte 2005 worship leaders Paula Hochstedler Stoltzfus and Kenneth Thompson place confessions in a basket during Tuesday morning's adult worship session.

Laurie L. Oswald

Songs: Ken Medema (left) brought special music, and Paul Dueck (with his Paraguayan harp) and a group of musicians led music for adult worship sessions.

ing half the salary she was making as a public school administrator. But she stepped out on faith. Less than a month later her husband died. Then she read in Joshua 1:9, "Be strong and courageous." God moved her "from being a believer to a truster," she said.

We are not just to witness but to be witnesses, she said. "There's a whole world out there needing to hear good news."

An anointing service followed her sermon. People came to be anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Friday morning, July 8: Worshipers heard from church planters in Raleigh and Hickory, N.C., then took an offering to help Mennonite churches in North Carolina.

Bishop Leslie III and Natalie Francisco, senior pastors of Calvary Community Church, Hampton, Va., focused their sermon on being of one heart and soul. "Unity emanates from the Spirit," said Natalie. Though each member of the body of Christ has a different function, all are equally important.

They described the core values of their congregation: being Christ centered, excellence propelled, seeker friendly, service oriented and family focused. But as believers, Natalie said, we are called "to make disciples of others in our community, nation and world, and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit."

We depend on God's grace, said Leslie. "When we reach our wit's end, we can be witnesses."

Following the sermon, people shared in a Communion service.

Saturday morning, July 9: Ray Aldred, director for the First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada, called on worshipers to continue to speak what we have seen and heard.

But what if our picture is too small? he said. "Jesus is bigger than our doctrinal statements."

Western Christianity no longer calls us to radical conversion, Aldred said. It has lost its ability to call for conversion from North American culture. His aboriginal people (he is a member of the Swan River Cree Nation) helped him hear the gospel story again.

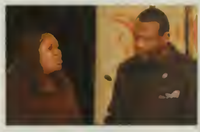
Aboriginal people emphasize listening before speaking, something most of us don't like to do, he said. "We are tempted to think we have arrived." We have reduced the gospel to being better behaved and pious.

"Conservatism and liberalism have never saved anybody," Aldred said. Our version of Christianity has become the folk religion of the West. We have privatized faith and reduced the gospel to T-shirts and bumper stickers, he said.

When we stay in our homogeneous unit, our picture of Jesus gets smaller, he said. We have a bent toward arrogance and think we're the first to get the Christianity thing right.

Institutions and nations never last forever, he said, but Jesus' story goes on. Let's speak what we have seen and heard.

Musician and songwriter Ken Medema followed the sermon with an improvised song summing up the messages of the worship sessions. He sang that if Mennonites stop being quiet they will be dangerous. His refrain ended, "Let everyone hear and see/the Mennonites have been set free."



Unity emanates from the Spirit. —Natalie and Bishop Leslie Francisco

Jesus is bigger than our doctrinal statements. —Ray Aldred

Everett J. Thomas

Bravo: Comedy duo Ted and Lee judge the lame man's leaping ability in a skit.

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Church USA leaders confer during discussion of the health-care access resolution on July 8. From left: moderator-elect nominee Sharon Waltner, Executive Board member Jim Harder, associate executive director Ron Byler, parliamentarian Sue Biesecker-Mast, moderator Duane Oswald and executive director Jim Schrag

by Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly

Table group process creates a 'culture of discernment' for major church issues.

Congregational and conference representatives to Mennonite Church USA's 2005 delegate assembly in Charlotte, N.C., embraced a new way of doing the work of the church that melded worship and work. The "table-group protocol" also allowed each of the 926 delegates to speak—at least to nine other people—on every issue before the assembly and assured that individuals or special-interest groups could not easily alter the plans established by the Executive Board (see page 32).

Speaking to government

Those plans focused on several national issues and how Mennonite Church USA should speak to those issues. But before sorting that out, the agenda called for debate about how we should address the U.S. government on any matter.

The issue was framed by two short presentations. J. Daryl Byler, director of Mennonite Central Committee's Washington Office, listed four reasons why Mennonite Church USA should "bother to witness to government." Those reasons included: because it is biblical, because it is part of our Anabaptist theology and practice, because our global brothers and sisters are asking us to do so and because the church has "prophetic imagination."

John D. Roth, history professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, framed his reservations as a "deep pastoral concern" that was not intended to be a rebuttal to Byler's call for speaking to government.

Roth noted that the 2004 presidential campaign "revealed a deep division within the Mennonite church that should be named, analyzed and openly addressed." Roth also proposed that "Mennonites in the U.S. should commit themselves to a five-year sabbatical from affiliations with any political party."

But not everyone was ready to accept the idea of such a sabbatical. One of the first to speak was Horace McMillon (see photo page 11).

"People have sacrificed too much to not be part of the political process," McMillon said.

Others were willing to consider such a hiatus

Everett J. Thomas

Representatives from congregations that participated in the testing phase of the health-care access statement were presented with a lamp during the Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly. From left: Karl Sommers, staff person for the health-care access commission, moderator Duane Oswald and June Thompsen

Delegates debate a proposal for "a five-year sabbatical from affiliation with any political party," list health care for Mennonite pastors as a top priority.

from political party involvement, but only with certain conditions.

"A sabbatical may be appropriate," Pauline Buller reported for her table group, "but it should not be a retreat."

Retreating from the political process was a concern of others as well. Jerry Kennell's table worried that "a sabbatical drags us back into too much cultural shyness."

Others wondered why the political process was being singled out.

"Maybe we should also take a five-year sabbatical from the consumer culture," Anita Amstutz said for her table. "We do believe we should speak to government, but we need a blueprint."

Some supported the notion that the church has become more concerned about national politics than is appropriate.

"We agree that political polarization has affected us as a church," Don Kouts said for his table. "We should be focusing not on red states but on the red-letter verses [in the Bible]."

Health-care access

The question of speaking to government was sparked in part by a two-year process set in motion by delegates to Atlanta 2003. Wanting to speak to the U.S. government about lack of health-care access for many citizens, an extensive study process was supposed to give this year's delegates a resolution they could adopt.

But during the past year, feedback from many congregations caused the health-care access commission to remove specific actions from the resolution placed before the delegates.

After discussions about the health-care access statement, each table group provided a written list of their priorities for Mennonite Church USA. According to Karl Sommers, who served as staff for the commission, three priorities emerged from the delegate feedback forms. Top priority called Mennonite Church USA members to be "better stewards of our own health." The second priority was for health-care access for pastors and church workers. Advocating for public policy changes was the third priority and, according to Sommers, had "strong interest" among delegates.

Delegates approved the health-care access statement by a 95 percent majority. To help congregations begin working at steps that grow out of their interaction with the newly adopted statement, the commission distributed a resource guide entitled "Healing Healthcare."

"By 2007 we expect to see organization plans and action statements [from congregations]," Sommers said.

Everett J Thomas

Delegate Horace McMillon responds to a July 6 proposal that Mennonites take a five-year sabbatical from political party affiliations. McMillon said, "People have sacrificed too much to not be part of the political process."

War in Iraq

A second resolution took even more time: a statement on the war in Iraq (see page 13). The resolution took a different course from all others. It was proposed by the Executive Board the day Charlotte 2005 opened. The board decided to craft a statement and place it before delegates because in the weeks before Charlotte 2005 many individuals and groups were requesting that Mennonite Church USA make a statement about the war.

But when the statement arrived on the floor, there were so many suggestions for changes that the delegates voted to send the original statement—and all proposed amendments—to the resolutions committee for processing.

When the statement came back on Saturday morning (with some of the 34 proposed amendments reviewed by the committee), it was approved almost unanimously.

"This resolution is primarily for us to use," said resolutions committee member Jim Harder. "It is a call to our own Mennonite Church USA family to act on our convictions. A secondary audience is the global church."

This resolution ... is a call to our own Mennonite Church USA family to act on our convictions. —Jim Harder

Antiracism

Explaining that white people need to be leading the church's efforts to dismantle racism, Executive Board members Jane Hoober Peifer and J. Daryl Byler led the delegate assembly in an hour-long exercise. To demonstrate the roots of racism,

Continued on page 12

Delegates approve a resolution on the war in Iraq, welcome Mountain States Mennonite Conference and consider joining Christian Churches Together.

Continued from page 11

Everett J. Thomas

Delegate James Lapp reports his table group's counsel to the delegate assembly. Table group representatives often lined up at the microphones to provide their feedback before it was time to start.

Elaine Bryant, also an Executive Board member, recounted the story of a small Hispanic congregation in Illinois that asked its conference for help financing a building about 10 years ago. The conference did not respond.

"So the congregation moved ahead," Bryant said, "and it is now a large, thriving congregation of 1,000 ... uninterested in Mennonite Church USA."

To engage the issues of racism in the church, table groups worked from a graphic that showed the roots of a racist church. Those roots included the power to enforce prejudice alongside white privilege. The graphic, adapted from original work by Mary Jo Osterman, also demonstrated that the antiracist church has its roots in the life-giving Old Testament words (such as Micah 6:8) and "New Testament words to live by" (such as Matthew 7:12).

Mountain States Mennonite Conference

One of few actions taken by the delegate assembly was to approve a new area conference that is in formation. After the necessary legal papers are filed this fall, Mountain States Mennonite Conference will be formed out of 16 congregations in Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference, two Western District Conference congregations and four "dual-conference" congregations that currently belong to both conferences.

"We believe this proposal ... is the best one for our situation," said Don Rheinheimer, staff person for the committee that formed the proposal and pastor of Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake, Colo.

Delegates spent time in table groups considering the proposal. When they went to the microphones to report, nearly all enthusiastically welcomed the new conference. One of the few questions related to the new conference's long-term viability. But Rheinheimer said the new conference will be larger than the current Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference.

"We saw an increase in people and money resources [after the plan was approved by the affected conferences]," Rheinheimer said.

Although forming a new conference was "not for the faint of heart," the process provided opportunities to ask basic questions about what a conference should do, Rheinheimer said. One result is an innovation called "relational accountability" in faith and life forums. The forums will be patterned after the nondecision-making role of Mennonite Church USA's Constituency Leaders Council.

"To remain in good standing in the new area conference, each congregation will be expected to participate in these new forums," said the recommendation from Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board.

The idea of such relational accountability sparked interest among many delegates who asked for more information about how such forums might work in their own conferences.

Christian Churches Together

"Our former detractors want to talk with us and be in relationship with us," said Andre Gingerich Stoner, who helped introduce an Executive Board proposal to explore affiliation with the new ecumenical organization called Christian Churches Together (CCT). "Some have called it a rare, God-given moment," he said.

Cheryl Bridges Johns, a leader from the Pentecostal Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) addressed the delegate assembly at the invitation of executive leadership. Johns explained that her denomination has lost the pacifist tradition it had in the early 1900s.

"The gifts that the Mennonite church offers are particularly needed at this time," Johns said. "We need you to help us discover who we are, who we have been."

Christian Churches Together, which has not yet formally organized, delineates five "families" among its invited constituencies: evangelical/pentecostal; historic Protestant; historic racial/ethnic; Orthodox; Roman Catholic.

"Do we as Anabaptists fall into any of the five 'families'?" asked Kevin Himes for his table group.

Youth, young adults speak up about what they want from Mennonite Church USA; "Culture of Call" display garners names of 179 potential new pastors.

Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag explained that CCT includes Mennonite Church USA among "evangelical/pentecostal."

Most table groups responded with enthusiasm to the idea of joining CCT, although some offered cautions. Resisting calls to join immediately, several table groups counseled a slower pace. Delegate Joyce Schutt's table group wanted to "move at a [slower] pace so those conferences or churches that were reluctant to join Mennonite Church USA" could support CCT membership.

No vote was taken on the proposal. However, each table group filed a written report with its feedback to the Executive Board.

Hearing from the next generations

Little Bear Busenitz, from Busby, Mont., and Miles Musselman, from Souderton, Pa., introduced Speak Up!—a new arrangement that allowed youth delegates to discuss the issues before the Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly.

"We need to live out the Sermon on the Mount," said Leah Yoder, Salem, Ore. "[That means] reaching out to the community, being tolerant and helping people think for themselves."

The delegate assembly also included many young adults, and they were given special notice at the end of the week.

Laura Steiner reported that more than 100 young adult delegates met on July 6 to discuss their experiences during the delegate assembly.

"We are excited about what the church is," Steiner said, "and excited about what it will become. Our ... involvement in local churches is desperately important to us."

Everett J Thomas

Matthias Luitzens and his mother, Rachelle, listen to Zenobia Sowell-Bianca. Almost all business conducted by the Mennonite Church USA delegate assembly was discussed in table groups first.

One way the delegates learned of young adult commitment to the church was through a special display in the convention center lobby where the names of those who might be called to pastoral ministry in a Mennonite congregation could be posted (see page 17).

Diane Zaerr Brenneman, executive leadership staff member in Mennonite Church USA's ministerial leadership office, presented the delegate assembly with 179 "Culture of Call" cards collected during the week. TM

Statement on the War in Iraq
Mennonite Church USA
Delegate Assembly
July 9, 2005

Preamble

In response to requests from area conferences, congregations and members for Mennonite Church USA to state our belief in God's call to peace and to invite peacemaking actions as individuals and congregations, The Executive Board offers the statement below. It follows a letter to President Bush, in September 2002, signed by 17,000 members that outlined alternatives to going to war in Iraq, and a similar letter from the Constituency Leaders Council in March 2003. In June 2004 the Executive Board sent a pastoral letter to our congregations during this time of global turmoil.

This is our faith:

We believe that peace is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance, even in the face of violence and warfare. (Article 22, Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, 1995)

We believe that the church is God's holy nation, called to give full allegiance to Christ its head and to witness to every nation, government and society about God's saving love. (Article 23)

This is our hope:

The biblical vision is of a day when nations will no longer learn war (Isaiah 2:4, Hosea 2:18, Micah 4.3), a day when God will wipe away all tears and when death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more. (Revelation 21:4). It is this glorious vision and the example of Jesus Christ that moves us, even now, to live as peacemakers in our world.

This is how we, as God strengthens us, choose to express our love:

We will repent for ways we have contributed to this war; We will pray for peace, justice and reconciliation; We will renew our commitment to teach peace to every generation and to provide youth with meaningful alternatives to military service; We will support Mennonite Central Committee's work in Iraq, including relief, development, and peace projects; We will encourage those called from our congregations to serve on Christian Peacemaker Team delegations in Iraq; We will offer our support to local military personnel and their families as they deal with the trauma of this war; We will reach out in friendship to local Muslims; We will join our voices with many other people of faith who are calling for our national leaders to end the U.S. military presence in Iraq, recognizing that such visibility is fueling a growing insurgency movement and adding to the daily suffering of ordinary Iraqis.

In all this, we seek to be "that 'city on a hill' which demonstrates the way of Christ" and to faithfully call "the nations (and all persons and institutions) to move forward toward justice, peace, compassion for all people." (Article 23, Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, 1995.)

CHARLOTTE 2005

Adult convention worship leaders Kenneth Thompson (left) and Paula Hochstedler Stoltzfus (right) pray for Mennonite Church USA moderator Duane Oswald (left) and Mennonite Church Canada moderator Henry Krause (right). LaVerle Schrag, Hutchinson, Kan., created the three-part "tongues of flame" sculpture.

Everett J. Thomas

Joint session calls for new relationship

Delegates want continued shared assemblies for MC Canada and MC USA.

Though some fear Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada may be growing apart, delegates at the Charlotte 2005 assembly urged church leaders to build new relationships between the denominations and to continue to hold periodic joint assemblies.

Delegates from both denominations spoke during a joint afternoon session on July 6, asking that the two churches pursue academic and pastoral exchanges, sister church relationships and continued gatherings that would be held in both the United States and Canada. Some delegates also sought to heal the rift they perceive has widened between the denominations.

"We at Mennonite Church USA could confess our sin of domination," Mennonite Church USA delegate Rachel Friesen said. "Those in Mennonite Church Canada could confess their judgmentalism of American Christians."

Other delegates believe the churches are more alike than their respective names and cultures imply.

"Because we share a common confession of faith, we really are one church," said Mennonite Church USA delegate Alice Suderman.

Still, delegates admitted there is continuing frustration that the denominations—in combining the former General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church—seem to have fractured along national lines. "There's still a lot of mourning that there's a separation of the two," said Mennonite Church Canada delegate Lydia Harder.

Delegates filled out two questionnaires during the July 6 sessions, critiquing the relationship between the two denominations and also examining the continued effectiveness of the shared Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective and the Vision: Healing and Hope statement, both adopted in Wichita, Kan., in 1995.

Mennonite Church USA moderator Duane Oswald and Mennonite Church Canada moderator Henry Krause gave delegates overviews of their respective denominations and guided table discussions during the joint session. They also described the evolution of the churches' relationship.

"As we worked together on the implementation of various activities forming our partnership, we observed a significant difference between our two churches," said Oswald.

Krause spoke of tensions but also joys within the relationship.

"We've had the sense that we were always the little brother or little sister when we met together with our American family," Krause said. "So there was significant joy in becoming a truly Canadian church that can work on issues of mission and theology in an equal partnership with Mennonite Church USA. There was also a significant loss for various parts of the Canadian church which had close ties to U.S. sisters and brothers."

Also during the joint session, delegates sent messages and prayers of encouragement to the Anabaptist church in Zimbabwe, the site of political and social upheaval, as well as of a drought and economic collapse, that have left more than 250,000 people displaced in recent weeks (see page 4). *—Robert Rhodes for* mPress *with contributions from Tim Miller Dyck.*

Mennonite Church USA could confess our sin of domination. … Those in Mennonite Church Canada could confess their judgmentalism of American Christians. —Rachel Friesen

MC Canada delegates set new priorities

Faith and Life Committee will address issues of ethics, policy and practice.

Mennonite Church Canada delegates focused on the purpose and structure of their church during their delegate assembly in Charlotte. Canadian delegates unanimously approved the formation of a Faith and Life Committee, a new five-person group to address questions of theology, ethics, policy and practice in the church.

At the 2004 Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Winkler, Man., delegates expressed a specific desire for the national church to take a greater role in this area. This new group is the response.

The mandate of the group is to "attend to the interface" between the Confession of Faith and church identity, give leadership in "discerning God's will on issues of theology, ethics, polity and practice" and develop resources for study and guidance for the church.

Table groups were mostly supportive of the proposal, some strongly so. Within the sense that the group was needed were also some worries about how exactly it would address theological areas where there are disagreements.

"Our major concern is if we see the mandate of this committee as putting out theological fires and making theological pronouncements. We assume the goal would be to lead us in discernment," reported table spokesperson Barb Draper.

Identity and purpose: Delegates also provided guidance on how Mennonite Church Canada should structure its overall mission and ministries by establishing a new statement of identity and purpose. After some revisions, the statement was adopted nearly unanimously.

"It's not replacing the [Vision: Healing and Hope] statement," said Jeremy Bergen on behalf of the resolutions committee. "It's the next step in our understanding of what we do together as a national church."

Top priorities: Delegates also ranked general church priorities and were asked to distinguish what the national church should be doing different from what congregations or area churches were doing. The top priorities identified by delegates were, in order:

- Finding and forming church leaders who can lead "toward what God wants us to become" and who "have a vision to expand our sphere of influence;"
- Working so that "healing and hope in Canada and other countries will increase;"
- Working so "every member and congregation will have a heart that seeks to know and do what God is doing;"
- Least important for the national church was that "every member will be able to articulate our confession of faith and their personal faith."

Canada-U.S. relationships: Table groups and individuals repeated calls for strong connections between Canadian and U.S. churches, preferably including another joint assembly held in Canada. Alternate formats were also proposed.

"Maybe we can do a joint gathering for worship, workshops, drama and music every six years modeled after Mennonite World Conference and have a Mennonite North America Conference," suggested delegate Ray Friesen.

There were also repeated wishes for another joint assembly to be held in Canada or closer to the border. There are still hurts felt by some Canadian delegates that neither of the first two opportunities for joint assemblies were held in Canada—even though initial agreements between the two churches were that the next joint assembly after the 1999 would be north of the border.

"The biggest thing is to keep the conference more northerly. There are a lot of kids who would have come if it wasn't so far," one youth reported.

"We are open to meeting together in the future but only if there is a real reciprocal relationship. The next meeting should be in Canada," stated delegate Craig Frere for his table group. Finances, geographic accessibility and little overlap in agenda were all mentioned as barriers for joint assemblies.

The Canadian church paid a significant price for coming to Charlotte to meet. Besides financial costs for those that came, delegate attendance was the lowest it has been in years. The 207 congregational delegates present were just seven more than needed for quorum. But delegates expressed appreciation for this assembly.

"We really learned a lot from each other," one delegate reported. Skills in the U.S. church at multicultural integration and church planning among minority groups were two examples raised.

Area conference membership only: A few congregations have asked to be members of their area conference only, not the national church body. Current bylaws make church membership in Mennonite Church Canada automatic when a local church joins their area conference. The table groups that reported were generally supportive of more flexible models of membership.

"Within a family, we have different levels of participation. We don't all attend the family reunions. We sometimes distance ourselves periodically, but we still are part of the family," said delegate David Martin. No resolutions were proposed or passed on the issue. A five-year agreement with churches in British Columbia currently allows for area church conference membership only, but that agreement expires next year.—*Tim Miller Dyck of* Canadian Mennonite

We are open to meeting together [with Mennonite Church USA] in the future but only if there is a real reciprocal relationship. The next meeting should be in Canada.
—Craig Frere

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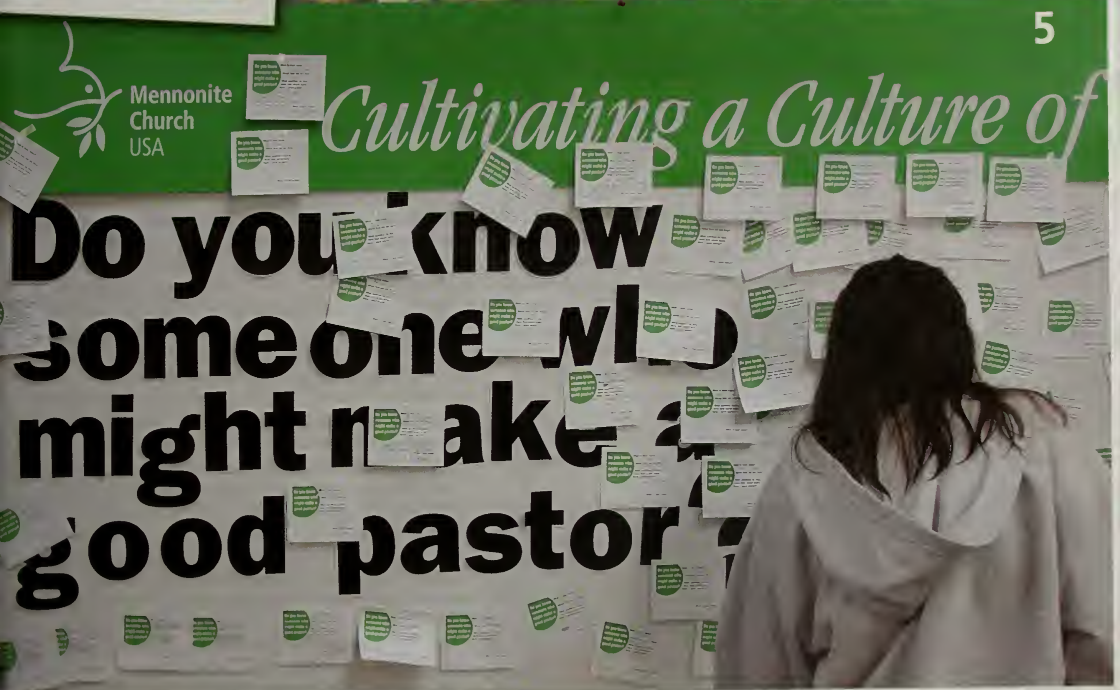


More pictures from Charlotte 2005

1. A combined adult-youth choir sings at the joint worship gathering on July 6. Photo by Everett J. Thomas
2. Andrea Weber Steckley plays violin as part of the worship band for the adult sessions. Photo by Laurie L. Oswald
3. Youth convention participant Ingrid Derstine paints Katie Stutzman's face during the festival for community children, one the servant projects. Photo by Brian Schlabach
4. Youth take five between sessions. Photo by Brian Schlabach
5. Conference-goers place names on a "Culture of Call" board as possible pastors-in-the-making. Photo by Everett J. Thomas
6. Kris and Matt Flinner of Martens Creek Mennonite Church in Millersburg, Ohio, lend support to their children, Abby (left) and Emrick. Photo by Laurie L. Oswald

In the background, people gather on July 7 for a hymn sing. Photo by Laurie L. Oswald

Youth can't keep quiet

Worship, servant projects and delegate sessions keep youth active at Charlotte.

by Hannah Kehr

The halls and meeting rooms at Charlotte 2005 were filled with more than 4,200 Mennonite youth and their sponsors walking, leaping and praising God. Of the 8,541 Mennonites at the convention July 4-9, the largest segment belonged to the youth convention, and the youth proved, in keeping with the convention theme, that they could not keep quiet. Whether through their vibrant worship, high-paced activity in the recreation hall or thoughtful discussion of ideas with the adult delegates, youth made their presence known.

A common critique was that youth delegates were not given a chance to discuss substantive issues … with their adult counterparts.

The week's activities centered around worship. Youth groups and sponsors waited an hour before the gathering music began so they could find seats close to the stage-in-the-round of the worship hall. Participants met 10 times to worship through song, Scripture, drama and preaching, led in worship by Anne Campion, Stratford, Ont., and Adam Yoder, Spokane, Wash.

Music is always a highlight of youth worship. Tim Shue, Kidron, Ohio, and the worship band led a variety of songs, from hymns sung a capella to old folk songs to fast-paced and new praise and worship songs paired with a guitar and drums. The youth learned a new theme song written by Shue, "Can't Keep Quiet." Ken Medema wowed the crowd as he developed a unique song on the spot after each worship service.

Scripture readings for the week came from the book of Acts. The youth drama team, with some help from the comedy duo Ted and Lee, reenacted the story of Peter and John healing a crippled man and the ensuing consequences of their actions (Acts 3 and 4).

Each of the 10 speakers emphasized that each person is beloved by God, the message brought by Jesus Christ continues to be relevant and each person's gifts can be used to bear witness to the gospel.

On Monday night, Luke Hartman, who teaches education at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., used rap to tell the story of Peter and John healing the lame man. He also said: "This week, we all come with preconceived ideas. I think God will shatter all my expectations, and he wants to do the same for you." On Tuesday evening, Brenda Matthews, an actress, poet and social activist from Chicago, used poetry and enthusiasm to speak about risk-taking and boldness. She said, "In each of you is a miracle. In each of you is the power God has called you to."

On Wednesday morning, Willard Swartley and June Alliman Yoder, who teach at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., each shared about the healing power available only through the name of Jesus. Yoder said, "All healing is a gift from God." On Wednesday evening's joint worship, Merv Stoltzfus, conference minister for Atlantic Coast Conference and a longtime youth minister, spoke about choosing God: "Choosing the God that chose you first is a difficult thing to do." At the end of the service, he invited all to respond

Tim Shue (right) and the worship band lead youth in a variety of songs.

to God's call by making a commitment to Christ and coming forward for prayer.

On Thursday morning, Lana Miller, associate director of convention planning for Mennonite Church USA, took a break from her daily task of reading "the most exciting announcements you'll hear today" at youth worship and spoke about each participant's purpose. Miller said there is only one valid answer to the question Why are you here? That is "to be in relationship with God." She went on to describe the importance of listening and spending time with God. She said, "When you have experienced this life-giving relationship with Jesus, you can't stop telling about the things you have seen and heard."

Thursday evening, Janet Plenert, executive director of international ministries for Mennonite Church Canada Witness, spoke about being bold and encouraged youth to use their gifts now. She said, "When you are told that youth are the future, people are forgetting and ignoring your gifts now." Afterward, youth were asked to approach the stage if they felt called by God to speak a message to their peers. Dozens thronged to the stage to share ways God had been working in their lives throughout the week. Anne Yoder, Baltic, Ohio, said she learned that "everyone is a bowl. We each have the capability of being filled by God."

Friday morning, Mark Vincent, leader of Design for Ministry, continued the call for action and spoke about the need to develop a church that is not "mediocre" but "remarkable." Following his message, Vincent asked youth to stand where they were if they felt called to make a commitment to Christ. That evening, Gareth Brandt, who teaches biblical studies at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C., encouraged youth to be "authentic and honest." He said: "Jesus called me out of my death. Jesus calls each of us out of death into healing and life. It starts with telling the truth about ourselves." Afterward, he invited youth to come forward to receive anointing with oil in order to "mark the experience of God present" in their lives.

On Saturday morning, Michele Hershberger, chair of the Bible department at Hesston (Kan.) College, sent participants home with a message of hope and an assurance that "you can't kill this movement [Christianity]." She used stories of people who have worked for Christ in all kinds of difficult situations, including the Anabaptists, Peter and John, the church in Ethiopia and others.

The call for youth to exemplify a visible faith and offer themselves and their gifts to God extended beyond the worship hall. Throughout the week, youth had opportunities to participate in activities that gave witness to the life of Jesus Christ. Many youth groups participated in servant projects with agencies throughout Charlotte. They performed jobs ranging from painting to yard work and home maintenance to helping with the convention registration process. Youth also donated $30,800 at worship Friday morning for China Educational Exchange. Youth also participated in various seminars and in a peace march (page 23).

Another way youth made their voices heard was through Speak Up! sessions. For the first time, youth delegates gathered to discuss their ideas and beliefs about God, the church and other issues. The format was similar to the adults' delegate sessions, complete with a moderator and round-table discussions. On Friday, around 100 youth delegates joined the adult delegate session to dialogue about the future of the Mennonite church. The Speak Up! sessions received praise from adults and youth alike. However, the program was not beyond reproach. A common critique was that youth delegates were not given a chance to discuss substantive issues regarding the business of the church with their adult counterparts. This is something that will hopefully be remedied at future conventions as the Speak Up! program comes into its own.

Charlotte 2005 gave youth much to talk about. However, as Gareth Brandt said in his message: "What is most important for you to realize in this mass gathering is that life is not primarily lived here. It is lived in families and churches and schools." And as youth convention participants returned to their homes, they did so with the knowledge that they can't keep quiet about what they learned.

Hannah Kehr is a student at Bluffton (Ohio) University and a member of Birkey Avenue Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

When you have experienced this life-giving relationship with Jesus, you can't stop telling about the things you have seen and heard.—Lana Miller

Brian Schlabach

Talk about the future: Chelsea Wyse, West Clinton Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, and John Tamrat, Faith Mennonite Church, St. Paul, Minn., listen to their peers at a Speak Up! delegate session.

Energy for the church

Junior high youth at Charlotte learn what Mennonite means for themselves.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Soon after Maryn Munley found herself explaining to someone that "Mennonite" wasn't the name of a mustard company, the junior high convention at Charlotte 2005 rescued her.

With about 210 other junior high youth from congregations across Mennonite Church USA, she could let her hair down and simply be who she was —a Mennonite among dozens of others her age.

Maryn, who came with a group of junior high youth from North Suburban Mennonite Church in Mundelein, discovered that even in Charlotte she wasn't out of the woods just yet in terms of names. "Traveling through the city we saw a sign that said, 'Welcome Memmonites,'" she says.

"In coming here," Maryn says, "I also learned more about my own Mennonite identity, the fact that we are peacekeepers and try to live a lifestyle that's less materialistic than the average American."

God just wants me to be me, an average, normal person, who is both happy and working for him.
—Deanna Sell, seventh grader

This focus on forging personal, community and spiritual identity is what planners sought, says Susan Nisly, Newton, Kan., director of the junior high convention and director for Service Adventure for Mennonite Mission Network.

They had lots of opportunities to gain sharper identity through worship when Thirstborne, a worship band, and a drama team and speakers talked about forging an identity in Christ, even though Christians live in a world that promotes other identities and voices.

Participants also enjoyed recreation, small-group time and a Ken Medema concert. For their service project, they created school kits to send to Albania through Virginia Mennonite Board of Missions. They also ventured off-site for an afternoon of swimming at an aquatic center and an evening outing at the Paramount Carowinds Theme Park.

The openness and energy of this age group in worship and in play makes the planners' job a joy, Susan says. "I love the junior high youth, because they are still so open to learning and trying new things," she says.

She, with other junior high planners—many of them young adults, such as Marcus Schlegel, Philippi, W.V.—care a lot that young people find themselves in God and in the church. They're not that far ahead of those they lead. At 33, Susan was the oldest of planners and on-site volunteers. Other people helping with activities during the week ranged in age from 19 to 26. "This provides a lot of young adults the opportunity to try their hand at leadership," Susan says.

Laurie L. Oswald

Energy: Junior high youth play a game at Charlotte.

Marc, unit leader for a Service Adventure unit in Phillipi, said the theme "Can't Keep Quiet" is not hard for junior high youth. Their enthusiasm can often be noisy, but the energy is their giftedness that draws him to them.

Lynne Biagi and Kay Kempf, sponsors who brought the Mundelein group, echo Susan and Marc in their love and respect for this age. "They are so willing to be part of things," says Kay, who taught a junior high Sunday school class last year. "I was shocked when my class said they didn't want to just help to plan worship—they wanted to lead it, all by themselves. They did the music, the artwork, even the sermon.

"The effects of the world can begin to jade them by the time they are in high school, so this is an optimum time to reach them, when they are tender and feeling a lot of feelings about God and themselves for the first time."

The youth themselves may give the biggest testimony to the fact that having a junior high convention can earn more dividends in energy for the church than the church expends.

"I came here looking for answers about God—does he want me to be happy or does he want me to be working in service all the time?" says seventh-grader Deanna Sell, another member of the Mundelein group. "I still don't have all the answers. But a lot of the worship speakers and friendships helped me realize that God just wants me to be me, an average, normal person, who is both happy and working for him."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA

The church's future

Charlotte 2005 convention brings children into God's larger family.

by Laurie L. Oswald

Those who think children came to Charlotte 2005 because their parents brought them are only partly right. That's because 210 children K-5 had their own convention, which included worship led by Gwen and Les Gustafson-Zook of Goshen, Ind., Bible stories to highlight the theme "Can't Keep Quiet," field trips, workshops and a servant project.

Planners strove to help children learn what it means to be part of Mennonite Church USA. And it's not only because their birth family belongs.

"We want kids to know that conventions aren't just for mom and dad, while they get shoved off into a corner somewhere," says Carol Grieser, Goshen, longtime volunteer coordinator for Mennonite children's conventions. "Children are the future of our church, and they need to feel they are special and important, too."

Rose Widmer, Goshen, a longtime volunteer curriculum developer for children at Mennonite conventions, says a sense of belonging to the larger family of God is especially important for children from smaller, more isolated congregations.

"We wanted to convey the idea that there is joy in following Jesus as one develops a relationship with God and with each other," she says.

Toward that end, each child joined one of about a dozen family groups. With their group, children participated in workshops, snacks, discussions and other activities. The family groups had such Bible names as Peter and John—two characters prominent in Acts 4, theme verses for Charlotte 2005—Susanna, Mary, Elizabeth, Zacchaeus and Matthew.

On Wednesday, each family group, after hearing the Bible story about the woman at the well, attended a workshop. In one family group, Levi Lehman of Chesapeake, Va., and Lauren Weirich of Topeka, Ind., attended Around the World, sponsored by Mennonite Mission Network. Phil and Christine Lindell Detweiler, who recently completed service in Benin, taught the children how women in that African culture carry water on their heads.

Children tried balancing a bowl on their head—minus the water but filled with a plastic ball—as they walked toward a tape marker down the hall. Levi and Lauren learned what it means to help others in the body of Christ with challenges. "I can't do this," Lauren cried, as Levi cheered her on under Phil's watchful eye. "Yes, you can," Phil encouraged, as Levi walked beside her.

Another workshop was by staff from Mennonite Central Committee's office in Washington on what it means to speak to government about justice issues. Others focused on signing for hearing-impaired people, collecting loose change to give to MCC water projects around the globe, playing cooperative games and making crafts, such as friendship bracelets. One afternoon a family group scoured the convention halls to ask adults, "What can't you keep quiet about?"

Besides worship and workshops, the children ventured out of the convention center to practice the theme. In their one servant project, they took bags of goodies to workers in hotels that housed convention-goers.

They also enjoyed field trips at such places as the Carolina Raptor Center, where they took a guided nature walk, and the Historic Latta Plantation, where they learned about life on a 19th-century cotton plantation. Later in the week they went to Discovery Place, a science center, where they simulated launching a space craft.

"Children have a lot to teach us about relationships, as they make friends so quickly," Rose says. "On the first day, I saw one little boy put his arm around another little boy he had just met, and away they walked, arm in arm, talking nonstop.

"It's that kind of thing you can't put into a curriculum and you can't teach. It's the kind of thing that just happens."

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Children have a lot to teach us about relationships, as they make friends so quickly. —Rose Widmer

Laurie L. Oswald

Challenges: Levi Lehman balances a bowl on his head, emulating African women.

Volunteers 'changed by being there'

More than 3,800 youth, adults let actions speak through servant projects.

Ryan Miller

Brandi Amstutz of Smithville Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio, helps rehabilitate former military barracks at Jackson Park as part of the servant projects at Charlotte 2005. The barracks will be converted into housing as part of a local ministry.

Some 40 youth and adults, sweat-stained work gloves covering new blisters, gathered outside a corner lot in Charlotte's inner-city Belmont neighborhood. For two hours, they had whacked at trees and bushes and carried branches and debris from the lawn as servant project volunteers with the Mennonite convention in town and a neighborhood beautification process.

Now the volunteers had a new gift for the owners of this yard—a blessing with their work.

"Be thou my vision O Lord of my life," they sang to three generations on the home's front stoop.

More than 3,800 people kept their vision on serving God through serving others as part of the convention's servant projects July 4-8. Organized by Mennonite Mission Network, volunteers read to children and worked at nursing homes. They helped run community carnivals and sorted through charities' clothes and food donations. Through high humidity and 95-degree heat, save for a Thursday afternoon downpour, participants hauled and hefted, painted and prayed.

They did not bring answers or God's presence into the community. The presence already existed.

"God landed us in certain places to work with ministries that were already happening," said Arloa Bontrager, servant projects coordinator and director of the Service Opportunities for Older People (SOOP) and Youth Venture programs for the Mission Network.

God landed us in certain places to work with ministries that were already happening.
—Arloa Bontrager

Volunteers learned about Charlotte agencies, ministries and communities while they worked. "We were changed by being there," Bontrager said.

Their actions changed others as well. While most volunteers at animal rescue group Hollow Creek Farm desire only to play with the animals, founder Nicole Salisbury watched more than 260 Mennonite volunteers build fences, wash machinery, paint and clean away manure. Their week of work would have taken staff six months to complete.

Salisbury is not religious. She thought most Christians would sit around in nice suits and do nothing but talk. This time, a few volunteers arrived wearing nice clothes after a last-minute site shift. They pulled weeds.

"They definitely practiced what they preached," Salisbury said. Instead of forced volunteerism, she witnessed true desire to serve.

"I've never seen so much enthusiasm. ... For them, then, to come out and thank me for letting them help out, that was amazing. The impact from one week's worth of work will carry over for years."

Not every act of service involved physical labor. Roelf David Kuitse of Walnut Hill Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., helped coordinate volunteers at Jackson Park, where a local ministry rehabilitated military barracks into temporary housing for the homeless. Kuitse told the convention newspaper, *mPress*, that one group, unable to help raze a chimney, instead prayed for workers and ministers during the demolition.

Another group served by walking through the Belmont neighborhood with the Salvation Army. Coordinator Tony Janzen said their leader would point out popular spots for drug deals and prostitution. The group then stopped, circled and clasped hands while youth prayed blessings on that area.

While picking up refuse, the Warwick River Mennonite Church in Newport News, Va., asked neighbors if they had prayer requests. One woman invited them into her home. Her brother died, she said. They moved closer and prayed.

"When we left," said Beth Gibbs of Warwick River, "she said, 'Three angels came to visit me today.'"

Volunteers said Christ's call requires both prayer and physical actions. Dan Weaver of Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., said, "Until you actually go out and do it, all you have is talk."

Each participant received a green wristband that glows in the dark. Organizers hope the bands will inspire servants to let their light shine before others, showing their good works and giving glory to God.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

JESUS says Put AWAY the SWORD
THOU SHALL NOT KILL

Brian Schlabach

Peace marchers (at left and below), young and old, walk and carry signs at Charlotte 2005. Later they experienced the rainy remnants of Hurricane Cindy.

Stop the war. Who'll stop the rain?

Gulf War veteran says U.S. troops return from war 'broken and alone.'

Nearly 300 participants at Charlotte 2005 marched to a local military recruitment center and back July 7, despite a downpour. The marchers held a worship service and heard speakers, including two military veterans, call for following the Prince of Peace.

About 350 attended a rally preceding the walk. There, speakers talked about the cost of war.

"To be at war costs us our souls," said John Powell of Mennonite Mission Network.

Powell said our voice needs to reach beyond the reach of the military and address those affected by poverty and part of the burgeoning prison population.

Carol Rose, co-director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, said she returned a few weeks earlier from Iraq, where she heard from an Iraqi family whose father and husband was shot in the back of the head by U.S. Marines. She said that Psalm 46 says God "makes wars cease, breaks the bow, shatters the spear."

Roy Williams, incoming moderator of Mennonite Church USA, told participants "there are no quick solutions."

"This is not just a fun walk but the beginning of a long, serious walk," he said.

Two military veterans spoke at the service across the street from the recruitment center, 1.1 miles from the hotel where the rally was held.

Tim Coil, a veteran of the Gulf War, said he suffered from the effects of depleted uranium used in weapons. He has had cancer and suffers from post-traumatic stress. Most of his friends from that war are divorced. He said he despises the "Support our troops" stickers, which do nothing for troops once they come back from war, broken and alone.

Dick Davis, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church, Dallas and former military chaplain, led a prayer for soldiers and victims of war.

Titus Peachey of Mennonite Central Committee's Peace Office called on people to declare their allegiance to Jesus—their hearts, minds, bodies and dollars.

"It is fitting to ask God to transform us," he said. The marchers included people from seniors to youth to parents with young children. All joined in standing and singing for peace. And all got soaked. —*Gordon Houser*

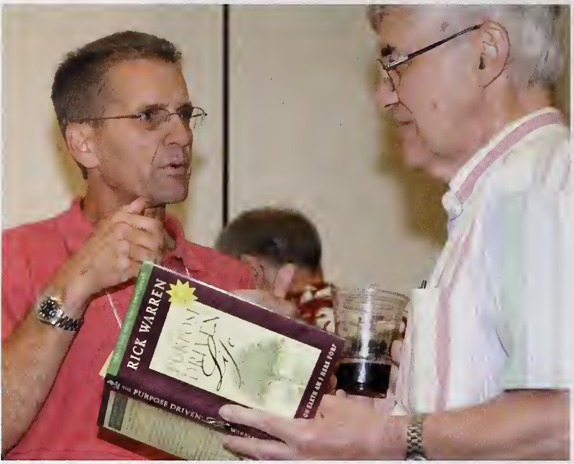
"LOVE YOUR E
MEANS DON'T K

Brian Schlabach

'Purpose-driven' consultation attracts 40

Mission Network sponsors estimate 200 MC USA congregations used material.

Ryan Miller



Howard Wagler (left) of South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church and Richard Yoder of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., at the "40 Days ... Now What?" consultation before the Charlotte 2005 convention.

Participants in a preconvention consultation—called "40 Days … Now What?"—likened the popular "purpose-driven" movement to a bungee jump: The process often sends congregations and individuals flying forward in their faith, but some end up springing back to where they began.

According to John Powell, director of missional church development for Mennonite Mission Network, which sponsored the July 4 consultation, more than 200 Mennonite congregations have followed some form of Rick Warren's purpose-driven models. During the consultation, about 40 church leaders examined Warren's concepts expressed in books such as *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The Purpose-Driven Life*.

Most of the leaders had followed one or more of Warren's programs. They lauded the ideas, which focus on changing thoughts and actions to allow people and congregations to find God's will for their lives and reach out to others. Many said the program vitalized their churches, but they sought the next step.

The five principles in the purpose-driven movement—worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism—can adapt to any congregation's style, but pastors agreed that focusing on the principles was only the first step. To continue growing after working through 40 days of purpose, they said, churches must change structurally.

According to Palmer Becker, director of Hesston (Kan.) College's pastoral ministries program, the movement's influence emphasizes congregational ministry, instead of denominational or parachurch organizations, for church growth. By reshaping internally and using group ministry, Becker said, congregations can support both members and outreach.

"We need to see the congregation as a congregation of groups and not just individuals," he said. Warren's Saddleback Church, Becker said, boasts a higher attendance in small groups—a purpose-driven emphasis—than in Sunday worship.

Cathy and Howard Wagler, pastors at South Hutchinson (Kan.) Mennonite Church, said structures are tools to support vision and mission, not the other way around. Structures, they said, must help mission advance rather than miring decision-making in lengthy processes. Others advised that structures must be cast in gelatin, not cement, to allow flexibility as congregations evolve.

Some pastors offered words of caution. John Troyer of Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich., said structures often function to prevent progress while preserving the status quo. While he acknowledged the purpose-driven values, Troyer believes seekers desire passionate, risk-taking faith that can be found within Anabaptism, rather than production-line operations found in some popular movements.

Gary Blosser, pastor of North Clinton Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio, agreed but said the purpose-driven philosophy, like any idea, is a tool that can complement Mennonite faith.

"We try to Anabaptize everything we use," Blosser said. "Adapt, adapt to fit your church."

The purpose-driven models, like any religious ideas, are tools to help others find the kingdom of God, not strict rules for living.

Howard Wagler said objections to parts of the system should not keep Christians from examining their purposes.

"Will you let 5 percent of a book keep you from learning 95 percent of it?" he said. "The Mennonite church has an awful lot to offer our culture today. *The Purpose-Driven Life* is one tool we can use along the way."

Some also questioned the movement to segment outreach programs, reaching only specific demographics which mirror congregations' existing makeup. Several speakers noted that Jesus reached a radically diverse population, and ministering only to niche seekers avoids the gospel call.

But Lee Miller of Howard-Miami Mennonite Church, Kokomo, Ind., said seeking purpose helped his congregation focus. Before they used the program, members assumed that people would come because the church existed. After the program, they reached into the community instead of letting others come to them.—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

New hymnal supplement debuts July 4

Preconvention seminar lets participants 'Sing the Journey' with new songs.

The first thing that 140 travelers did July 4 after journeying to Charlotte 2005 was to celebrate *Sing the Journey*, a new companion to *Hymnal: A Worship Book*.

Preconvention seminar planners led participants through 31 songs and other worship resources from *Sing the Journey*, which has 118 songs and about 70 prayers and litanies. It was the official songbook of the adult assembly of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, to be used along with selections from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, created in 1992.

"A story in the April 5 *Christian Century* talks about how a group of sherpas [guides] in the Himalayas walked and climbed with a group of Western mountaineers for several days and nights," said Marlene Kropf, a member of the committee that compiled the new resource, and minister of worship for Mennonite Church USA.

"After a long period of almost continuous journeying they abruptly halted, put down the equipment and rested, not going to sleep but sitting alert, as if waiting for someone. When the Westerners asked, the sherpas explained simply, 'We have traveled a long way; we are waiting for our souls to catch up with our bodies.'

"Because convention-goers will have just arrived in Charlotte after a long journey, they may find it helpful to let their souls catch up with their bodies—in silence, in song and in prayers. After experiencing the deep engagement with people here today, it makes me wonder if we should start every convention out this way."

Singing through the new resource seemed to center spirits in both quiet and robust moments. During "Be Still," an African-American traditional song sung by early slaves, many closed their eyes and tapped their feet quietly. In "Over My Head," another African-American traditional, participants enjoyed a call and response format as well as free harmony and spontaneous movement.

The project had its scary moments, too, said Ken J. Nafziger, professor of music at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. He helped whittle the final draft down from about 160 selections to 118.

The process of making final selections for this supplement was really terrifying at times. —Ken J. Nafziger

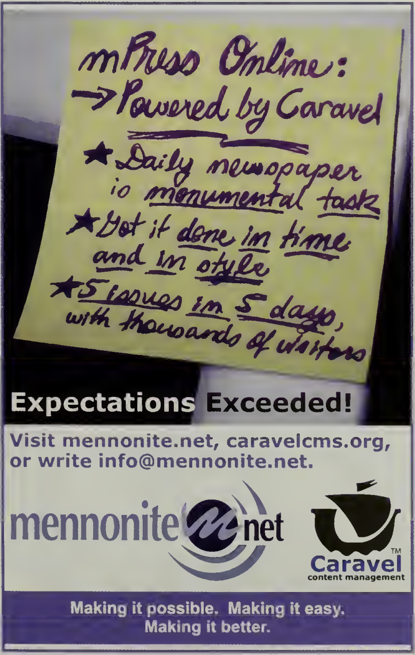
"The process of making final selections for this supplement was really terrifying at times," Nafziger said. "We were making choices on behalf of people we don't know. And we couldn't really surmise what state the church would be in by the time we were ready to use this resource.

"Another terror is the fact that there is no chance for changing our choices now. I worried about whether there would be some flaw or mistake. I also worried about people's responses. … But I had to let all that go, knowing that when our part was finished and the supplement was printed, it wouldn't belong to us anymore. It now belongs to the people."

The supplement was published by Faith and Life

Laurie L. Oswald

Kathy Neufeld Dunn and Larry Diener join 140 other participants who sang through 31 songs in the new hymnal supplement *Sing the Journey* at its preconvention rollout.



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Seminars overflow with interest

Charlotte 2005 offered more than 130 seminars—for youth, young adults, adults—on topics such as culture, worship, mission, prayer, antiracism, journaling, masculinity, leadership, aging, suicide, native ministry, money and pornography. Many had overflowing attendance. Some—such as “Is Jesus the Only Way?”—had to move to a larger room.

The convention also offered four Bible studies: “Jesus’ Peace Theology,” “Come Gather ’Round,” “Can’t Keep Quiet (Acts 4:20)” and “Reading the Bible from a Missional Perspective.” People also signed up to read through the Bible in 30-minute slots—but not during worship times. By Thursday afternoon, they had read the Old Testament (1,601 pages) and the New Testament (238 pages).—*gh*

FILM

Pearl Diver, a feature-length feature film by Sidney King, a 2000 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, was shown twice at Charlotte 2005 to packed rooms. Shot a year ago in Goshen, the film is a present-day drama about two sisters who grew up conservative Mennonite in northern Indiana. They come together 20 years after the murder of their mother. One sister is a writer in Chicago, the other a farmer’s wife who has stayed in the church. King tells a compelling story, and the acting is solid. The camera work is uneven, and some clichés—more of writers than of Mennonites—hinder the narrative. Still, this is a promising first feature.—*Gordon Houser*

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Everett J. Thomas

New moderator: Roy Williams, of Land O’Lakes, Fla., and pastor of the College Hill Mennonite Church in Tampa, began his two-year term as Mennonite Church USA moderator on July 9 at the conclusion of Charlotte 2005.

Mennonite Church USA
Delegate Assembly
Appointments
July 9, 2005

Executive Board
- Moderator-elect: Sharon Waltner, Parker, S.D.
- Addie Banks, Bronx, N.Y.
- Edith Landis, Telford, Pa.
- Olivette McGhee, Atmore, Ala.
- Samuel Lopez, Lancaster, Pa.
- Sue E. Miller, Middlebury, Ind.
- Merrill Moyer, Souderton, Pa.
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Nagelvoort introduced as MMA chief

Brings background as financial analyst, Wall Street investment banker

Everett J. Thomas

Favors bow ties: Skip Nagelvoort

During a Mennonite Church USA delegate session on July 5 that focused on Mennonite Church USA agencies, MMA board chair Carol Suter introduced the stewardship agency's newly appointed president: Skip (Terry) Nagelvoort. Nagelvoort will begin leading the 60-year-old organization on Aug. 1 upon the retirement of Howard L. Brenneman (see page 5).

Although Nagelvoort does not have a Mennonite background, Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, said, "His faith perspective is very compatible with Mennonite Church USA and our missional focus. Skip is clearly comfortable with church service and theology in ways that make him well suited for the leadership role at MMA. God has made Skip available for this calling."

"He brings experience to the position from Wall Street to Main Street," said Suter. "We believe he brings the best of business to the best of the church in a 21st-century global context."

Nagelvoort began his career at Connecticut General Life Insurance Co. as a financial analyst and has held senior executive positions with Wall Street investment banks. An entrepreneur for the past 20 years, he ran his own firm, Nagelvoort & Co., which initially specialized in investment banking.

Nagelvoort—who favors bow ties—and his wife, Mary, have belonged to Presbyterian and Reformed churches and plan to actively participate in an Anabaptist congregation after joining MMA.

"I feel very comfortable with the Mennonite/Anabaptist community because it has taken faith so seriously—personal standards and commitments are high," he said. "MMA exists because of that significant commitment to faith and community."

Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board met Nagelvoort and confirmed him for the position during its preconvention session on July 4. Before bringing Skip and Mary into the room to meet the board, Suter passed out a news release and copies of Nagelvoort's resume. One of the first questions related to how long Nagelvoort expects to be on the job.

"We've talked about a five-year commitment," said Suter.

The Nagelvoorts currently live in Holland, Mich., and will be moving to Goshen, Ind., where MMA's offices are located.—*Jodi Beyeler for* mPress *with Everett J. Thomas*

His faith perspective is very compatible with Mennonite Church USA and our missional focus.—Jim Schrag

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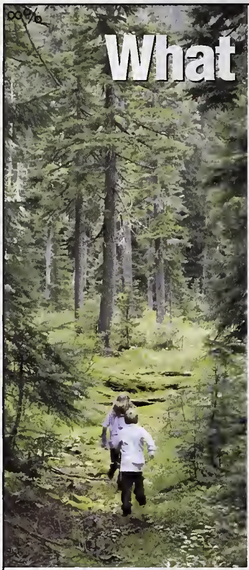

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Mennonite Central Committee is recruiting for the position of ***MCC liaison to the United Nations in New York***. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position. The liaison's assignment is to foster a Christian pacifist vision in the conduct of international affairs at the UN, interpret MCC to the UN and advocate relevant policies on behalf of MCC.

Significant experience outside North America and Europe, or other highly industrialized areas of the world, is important. Training in international relations, law or theology is preferred. Self-motivation and skill in cross-cultural communication are required. Relating to UN diplomats, hosting MCC workers, overseeing the work of office interns, and maintaining regular contact with MCC offices defines the routine work of the MCC UN Liaison Office in New York. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically under-represented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply.

Contact Prem Dick for a copy of the job description, and send him a letter of intent and a resumé by email to psd@mcc.org, or by fax at 717-859-2171 by Sept. 1, 2005. The position is scheduled to begin Dec. 1, 2005.

Full-time pastor in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Congregational profile available. MLI required. Contact Gerald Bradfield http://home.ntelos.net/~lynsidemenn; phone 540-942-4572 H.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the following service worker assignments. Contact your nearest MCC office or Goldie Kuhns, at 717- 859-1151 or gpk@mcc.org, for an application. Job descriptions are on MCC's Web site: www.mcc.org/serve.

Muslim/Christian exchange participants in a three-year assignment for a couple in Iran. Interest in studying Islam is essential; degree in religious studies, including Anabaptist theology and history, is preferred.

Accountant for a three-year assignment in Indonesia to provide service for MCC's country program and tsunami response. Training in accounting and three years of experience is required.

English/theology teachers for a three-year assignment at a university in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. A couple is preferred; a master's degree is required for visa purposes.

Pathways to Portage: A Century of People of Purpose in Portage County by Elmer S. Yoder will be available Homecoming Weekend, Nov. 5-6, 2005. Outlining the history of Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church from 1905-2005, the book contains 21 chapters, 422 pages and 125 photos. Prepublication sale price: $20, plus $4 postage. After Oct. 25, regular price: $25, plus $4 postage. Order from Don and Pauline Yoder, 9511 Lido Lane, Streetsboro, OH 44241. Make checks payable to Aurora Mennonite Church.

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Interested people are encouraged to send inquiries or resumé to Chair, Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 20299, St. Catharines, ON, L2M 7W7. Email scumc@bellnet.ca, phone 905- 935-8017

Landis Homes is seeking an ***RN campus supervisor***. Landis Homes is a continuing care retirement community surrounded by farmland in the center of Lancaster County, just southeast of Lititz, Pa. The ministry of Landis Homes is to serve aging adults and their families by honoring and enriching their lives in a community of Christ-like love. The RN campus supervisor is a full-time night position, 11:45 p.m.-8:15 a.m., with only occasional weekends. This individual provides campus oversight to all areas, including health care, assisted living and residential living. Experience in medical/surgical and/or gerontological nursing preferred. We offer good pay, excellent benefits, a supportive environment, plus assistance with moving expenses. For more information about Landis Homes, visit our Web site www.landishomes.org. Apply to Human Resources, Landis Homes, 1001 E. Oregon Road, Lititz, PA 17543, fax 717-581-3899, email aheinly@landishomes.org or call 717-581-3936.

Holy Rood Mennonite Church, in Edmonton Alberta Canada, is seeking a ***full-time senior pastor and possibly a half-time associate pastor***. Consideration will also be given to hiring a pastor couple where the spouse would serve as the associate pastor. Tentative starting date is Jan. 1, 2006. We are members of Mennonite Church Alberta and Mennonite Church Canada. Average attendance is 80-100 in a congregation diverse in cultures, ages and walks in life. See www.holyroodmennonite.ca for further information about the congregation. Interested applicants please contact our Alberta Conference Minister, Jim Shantz, at 780-485-2518, and Guenther Toews, chair of pastoral search committee at 780-458-9358.

Part-time conference minister for **New York Mennonite Conference** beginning October 2006. Conference profile available: http://nymennon.bfn.org/. MLI required. Contact Philip Martin amcpastor@highstream.net, 716-937-0412. Applications accepted through October 2005.

Hesston College is accepting applications for the position of ***food services director*** for its highly respected food service operations. This person provides overall strategic and operational planning and management of institutional food services including the dining hall, snackshop and catering operations. This is a full-time position during the school year and half-time during the summer months. The successful candidate will have experience at a management level in quantity food service operations and have demonstrated the ability to lead a team of highly dedicated employees. Familiarity with state food service codes, menu planning, recipe development and food purchasing is important, as is familiarity with Hesston College, Mennonite Church USA and its constituents. To apply, send résumé to Human Resources Office, Hesston College, PO Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062 or email debbiej@hesston.edu. EOE.

West Swamp Mennonite Church, an established congregation in Quakertown, Pa., is seeking a ***pastor of youth ministry***. The person in this position will be responsible for planning and leading junior and senior high programs and working with others planning children and young adult activities. For further information contact West Swamp Mennonite Church, 2501 Allentown Road, Quakertown, PA 18951, 215-536-7468; wswamp@enter.net, Rod Rush committee chair and Warren Tyson conference minister.

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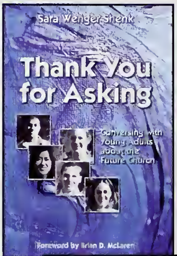
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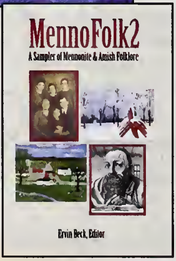

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Let's do ethics at the dinner table

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

I have learned something about "the poor." There is no such thing. I am not denying the reality of poverty in the richest nation on the planet. I witness its effects every day. Far too many people live in poverty or too close to it for comfort. It is a sin for which I fear we will be held accountable.

I am learning, though, that the label is not helpful. Like other labels, it is convenient. It also objectifies, makes it possible for us to speak of millions of human beings as if the only thing that defines them is what they lack. Individual names and faces, hopes and dreams, gifts and needs are melted together into a mass called "the poor." Meanwhile, we continue to stand a few steps apart. We care, and rightly so. But we remain a few steps removed.

As an inner-city pastor, I am learning about the lives of my neighbors. Many of them live near or below the poverty line. Some have college educations. Some are high-school dropouts. Some struggle with addictions or emotional problems. Some are single, some married. Some are both, raising children single-handedly in the absence of a spouse, who has run off or landed in prison. Some are optimistic, even hopeful. Others are cynical and suspicious. Some are Republicans, some are Democrats. Some are Christians, and others claim no faith. Some are pitiable, others heroic.

Many of them are my acquaintances, and some are my friends. The diversity of their personalities, needs, preferences and dreams challenge me to put away the label "poor." They are my neighbors.

Sometimes I question the value of doing ethics anywhere other than the kitchen. I wonder if it is ultimately beneficial to make ethical claims in a vacuum. I wonder if we help anyone when we stake out positions on issues in the abstract. Rather than develop a theology or ethics that says how God feels about the poor or how we ought to treat the poor, maybe we ought to sit down and have dinner with our neighbors and go from there.

In my short tenure as a Mennonite pastor, I have read multiple statements on issues affecting us as conferences and as a denomination. Statements on abortion and the war in Iraq. All theologically sound. All well-intended. All containing the wisdom and insight of the community of faith. Most at least one step removed from the living, breathing neighbors we wish to serve.

Suppose instead of making broad statements about broad topics we were to do our ethics at the dinner table? Rather than make a statement about God's solidarity with the poor, let's invite our neighbors to eat with us and together try to make sense of what God is doing in our lives.

Rather than make a statement on homosexuality, let's invite our gay neighbors to dinner and together try to make sense of what God is doing in our lives. Let's invite a pregnant teenager to dinner and have a similar conversation. Or someone lacking health care or struggling with an addiction.

Changing the means may not change the ends of our ethical thinking. We may still conclude that homosexual behavior is sinful. We may still argue for God's preferential option for the poor.

But I think we must risk the purity of our position for the sake of those we may otherwise leave lying by the side of the road (Luke 10: 25-37). When we eat with our hungry neighbor, walk alongside our gay neighbor, help our young neighbor raise her baby, we may discover God in places we never expected. Rooted in relationship, we and our ethics will be transformed in the process.

In doing ethics face to face, we'll more quickly dispose of labels. We'll no longer be so objective. Instead we'll do ethics with those whose needs it is meant to address. Such practice will humanize what can be a sterile exercise, whose primary purpose is to give us a place to stand.

What we really need is a place to sit. Right across the table from our neighbors. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Light in the darkness

I want to express my appreciation for the June 21 issue of *The Mennonite*. Your articles on depression were timely and beneficial. I especially appreciated the article by Janae Yoder. Her openness and skillful writing were evident. Our Sunday school class recently finished seven sessions on depression and mental illness. The response was unbelievable. Attendance was up over 30 percent, and the long-term effects are exciting. I encourage you to continue to have articles on this most important subject.—*Joseph Hackman, Emmaus, Pa.*

Thanks for including the much-needed articles on depression in your June 21 issue. In 2003, I was diagnosed with severe depression and continue to be in therapy. I shared in a worship service at the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference about my journey and how it has changed Burr Oak Mennonite Church, where I pastor. That was a huge step for me, but the outpouring of loving responses was surprising and healing at the same time.—*Philip D. Leichty, Rensselaer, Ind.*

The church need not be afraid to support those who are suffering from mental illnesses, addictions or any other type of disease. But the church and individuals within the church need to realize where their own strengths and weaknesses lie. There is a difference between trying to fulfill the obligation of service to another and walking alongside someone in pain out of love.

I understand what it is like to try to support someone who suffers from a mental illness and will not receive the support offered. It is like trying to pet an abused and frightened animal: You will be bitten. However, I also understand what it is like to walk in the deep and heavy darkness of depression. I have been there, and if it had not been for the support group I joined and the people who committed to walk with me, I probably wouldn't be where I am today. Finally, I want to share one of the lessons I have learned in my healing and helping processes: You cannot make someone change; they have to do it on their own. So offer up what you can and be at peace if it doesn't turn out the way you hoped. —*Jessica Walter, Mechanicsburg, Pa.*

Resolution on the war in Iraq

As a first-time delegate to Charlotte 2005, I was most affected by the work to adopt the statement on the war in Iraq. As good as it is, however, the statement falls short of the obligation of a faith community that truly believes we "can't keep quiet." In addition to the statement, we must, as an entire faith community, speak humbly yet with conviction and authority to the leaders of our nation about ending the war.—*John Jay Boyce, Indianapolis*

I was not at the Charlotte convention, but my wife was and brought back the resolution on Bush's war in Iraq. While the content of the statement pleased me, it seems like the timing of it renders it ineffectual. Why could not the same statement have been made in 2003? Our denomination wishes to be known as missional, evangelical and peace loving. The time to demonstrate these tendencies is before a war starts, even if this means going against conventional wisdom. In early 2003, public support for invading Iraq was around 70 percent in favor. Public support has now reversed itself, and a majority of people concede that Bush's war in Iraq was a bad idea. A more cynical observer would ascribe the timing of the recent resolution to a wish not to espouse unpopular ideas—such as the connection between peace and evangelism—during a season of bogus patriotic ardor.—*Paul R. Schlitz Jr., Baltimore*

The unconvention

The June 21 "Now Speak with Boldness" ad for the "unconvention" in Charlotte was overtly anti-Semitic. The tiny disclaimer at the bottom did not in any way justify its publication. I believe *The Mennonite* owes its readers an explanation at the very least, if not an apology. Do you have a policy that requires you to accept every ad that is offered and paid for? Would you accept an ad that called Martin Luther King Jr. a communist or called the pope antichrist? Would you accept an ad that called President Bush a liar or said the United States was Satan?—*David Rensberger, Decatur, Ga.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Mennonite Church USA delegates at both Atlanta 2003 and Charlotte 2005 debated whether and how Mennonites should "speak to government." Those debates also revealed an uncomfortable inconsistency: We often speak to government about peace and justice matters, but a 2003 resolution on abortion did not want to use legislation "to force others to comply with our Christian standards." Charlotte 2005 delegates adopted a resolution that addresses the lack of health-care access for millions of U.S. citizens, but the resolution calls for few specific government actions. Behind this year's debate was another cross-current: deep political divisions within the church that John Roth says (page 10) were exposed by last year's U.S. presidential election. But delegates also heard J. Daryl Byler list some compelling and historical reasons why Mennonite Church USA should speak to government (page 8). Our designer, Dee Birkey, weighs in on the subject with her cover design and asks, "Is the spirit of Menno Simons being veiled by a preoccupation with matters of the state?"—*Editors*

Re Ingrid Zundel being a speaker at the Charlotte "unconvention": She has a story to tell that should be heard. I have read the whole episode in the book that was published about the sordid affair. Her husband, Ernst, was treated like a criminal and taken into Canada without proper legal procedure and later back to Germany. I am not anti-Semitic, but I am anti-Israeli government and army. If anyone keeps up with what Christian Peacemaker Teams observe and witness, how could they be otherwise? We give Israel more foreign aid than any other country. We supply the bulldozers that demolish the Palestinian homes and olive orchards.—*Jack Stauffer, Newton, Kan.*

Developmental disabilities and mental health

Thanks to Paul D. Leichty for his insightful and sensitive article, "Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health" (July 5). Paul provides a vital service in helping us understand distinctions so we will in turn use appropriate language in speaking about these matters. Many times I have observed people who felt hurt and marginalized by incorrect, unjust labels and attitudes.—*Kathryn Hunsberger Seitz, Beirut, Lebanon*

Mennonites slow to share faith

Jerry Kennell made important points that should be taken seriously by every Mennonite ("Mennonite Because We Say So," July 5). While every other church seems to be discovering the Anabaptist understandings of following Christ, Mennonites are slow to recognize what others find compelling about Anabaptism. We seem to be reluctant to share our faith with our peers in business and the professions and in the places where we live and work.—*Richard K. MacMaster, Gainesville, Fla.*

The beauty of a frosty morning

Re the July 5 Grace and Truth column by Anne Stuckey ("Sun on the World"): Thank you, God. Thank you for *The Mennonite* and thank you for the gift of Anne Stuckey's writing. I remember the beauty of that frosty morning. After following the thought pattern of Stuckey's article, I began to be in awe of our God of beauty and gifts and the awful truth of my use of weapons.—*Marilyn Yoder, Archbold, Ohio*

Grieve Cornelia Lehn's death

Cornelia Lehn died on July 2 (see page 6). In the Mennonite church and around the world, Cornelia Lehn blessed the lives of countless children and Christian educators in her position as director of children's ministries for the Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church in the 1970s and 1980s. She was a superb storyteller, an exemplary teacher, an inspiring leader in congregational resourcing and a creative editor and writer of Sunday school curriculum and books. She was one of the main driving forces for the Foundation Series, an Anabaptist children's church school curriculum. Cornelia was also a strong advocate for world peace, making a witness by withholding the war tax portion of her federal taxes. As a church body, we grieve Nellie's death and celebrate her rich life and ministry.—*Rosella Wiens Regier, Newton, Kan.*

Rules help discernment

I was troubled by Everett J. Thomas' editorial "Rules Help Discernment" (June 21). I am reminded of the quote "Dissension is a patriotic act." I worry that our Mennonite church is promoting a way to "quiet" minority dissension among us in our orderly way of disciplining "wayward members." There are many incidents in history when churches in general quieted dissension—including major issues of civil rights, lay leadership, the rule of women and children in the church. I recommend that you allow the minority to have a voice in *The Mennonite* as well. I know they do not feel everything was done "decently and in order."—*Grace Dickerson, Washington*

In response to the June 21 editorial: Isn't it ironic that almost 500 years ago Menno Simons (and others) severed his relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Didn't that church also believe it had the ultimate authority to determine what was right and wrong? Did Brother Menno just flip over in his grave?—*Gladys E. Keener, State College, Pa.*

Everett J. Thomas' June 21 editorial stands history on its head in a breathtaking manner. The 1995 Confession of Faith, standing in a long Mennonite tradition, was never intended to be a legal code. It has become such (selectively) as a denominational majority has worked to silence a minority through the influence of outside conservative cultural forces in the United States. It is no surprise the Mennonite church is not as "roiled" in 2005, since legal precedent on narrow matters of sexuality has been carefully built brick by brick. I firmly believe the Mennonite church in 2080 will look back in shame at our current lack of grace in the use of the confession of faith and denominational documents on sexuality.—*Sam Steiner, Waterloo, Ont.*

Re "Rules Help Discernment": It is puzzling that Everett J. Thomas picks and chooses the rules he thinks the church as a discernment community should keep without recalling the rule promised at Saskatoon in 1986 and Purdue, Ind., in 1987 that

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Regarding the issue of "speaking to government," Mennonite Church USA should:

○ do more (55%)
○ do less (13%)
○ it depends on the issue (26%)
○ not sure (6%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Continued on page 23

IN BRIEF

Keim begins as Hesston's eighth president

Howard Keim took office June 20 as the eighth president of Hesston College. He said gearing up for the upcoming school year is a top priority. "That includes finding out what's expected of me on campus, planning my travel schedule through December and helping other areas refine their goals for the year," he said. Classes begin Aug. 22.—*Hesston College*

Former coach at Bluffton shoots hole-in-one at golf benefit

Kenny Mast, Crystal River, Fla., 79, who coached track, football, basketball and golf from 1951 to 1967 at Bluffton (Ohio) University, shot a hole in one at Bluffton's eighth annual alumni and friends golf scramble to benefit the university athletics program July 16-17. "It always is a surprise when it happens," said Mast. "I got pretty lucky."—*Bluffton University*

Mennonite workers in London call for hope

LONDON—In the aftermath of the July 7 bombings of London's public-transport system, Mennonite Mission Network personnel in the city say they'll strive to be a loving and prayerful influence.

Some of the workers were out of the country at the time of the attack. Those who were present were unharmed. No one connected with Mission Network was reported injured. Now the challenge is to help others react to and respond to the pain.

"I think it should be clear that in faith we are a people of hope, not to be ruled by fear," said Charletta Erb, Bridge Builders trainer and mediator at the London Mennonite Centre (LMC). "Perfect love drives out fear. In the midst of fear, we are called to live out the new order of creativity, hope and love."

According to Erb, people at the center didn't realize anything had happened at first. Participants who were signed up for a Congregational Conflict Consulting course arrived a little late that morning, complaining about the slowness of the public transport system. No one knew why.

There are no immediate plans to alter any of LMC's regularly scheduled events. The workers in London ask for continuing prayers as they resume their ordinary tasks.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Bethel on track with sports complex

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has received $550,000 from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla., for the school's new sports complex (above). The gift completes the challenge grant the foundation awarded last July. To receive the grant, Bethel had one year to raise an additional $2.1 million. Alumni, friends, foundations and corporations helped Bethel meet the challenge. The 2,500-seat sports complex, due to be completed this month, will be dedicated at Bethel's annual Fall Festival on Oct. 1.—*Bethel College*

Iraqis fear Iraqi police more than U.S. military

BAGHDAD, Iraq—"Most Iraqis dislike the police and Iraqi National Guard, whom they regard as thugs with guns, writes Greg Rollins, a Christian Peacemaker Teams worker in Iraq.

"The other day I watched a police convoy pass," Rollins writes. "I could hear the shooting from several blocks away. All the cars pulled over and waited for the convoy to pass. The first truck sped by with a gunman hanging out the window holding his Kalashnikov in one hand while he yelled. ... The shooting came from the last vehicle in the convoy. The policeman hanging out the back kept shooting into the air despite the fact that all the cars were out of the way."

While the police and ING are not the only convoys that drive this way, the people are more disturbed by them than by the U.S. convoys.

In Fallujah, people told CPT that the police and ING are worse than the U.S. army. "I would rather be arrested by the U.S. than the Iraqis," one man said. "At least they would treat us better."

Fallujans told CPT that whenever a car bomb goes off, the police and ING shoot first and ask questions later. Even though the Fallujah curfew starts at 10 p.m., people are usually home shortly after 8 because the police and ING will harass them if they are not.

"Fear of the Iraqi Special Forces has arisen," Rollins writes. "They are U.S. trained and work closely with the U.S. military, carrying out house raids, sweeps and major operations. People say they are brutal and that one of their brigades is made up of anti-Saddam Iranians from a militia called the Badr Brigade. An official from the Interior Ministry told CPT that approval for the ISF's violent behavior goes all the way up to the U.S. Embassy.

Josiah Garber

Guest dons burqa at Global Fair

Gloria Hess, a mission worker who has served in Central Asia, helps a guest catch a glimpse from inside a burqa at a Global Fair June 25 during Eastern Mennonite Missions' annual Celebration of Mission weekend in Lancaster, Pa.—*Eastern Mennonite Missions*

Philadelphia Mennonite High School

PMHS graduates continue strong tradition

The 2005 Philadelphia Mennonite High School graduates celebrate continuing the six-year tradition of 100-percent college acceptance in the senior class. Principal Barbara Moses, assistant principal Joseph Dugan and board chair Mark Garis awarded diplomas. PMHS, which opened in 1998, is the only Mennonite high school in a major metropolitan city. Enrollment increased last year from 80 to 100 students in grades 9-12.—*Philadelphia Mennonite High School*

One family told CPT their three brothers were arrested by the ISF's Wolf Brigade one night, and the next evening they saw the brothers on TV looking beaten and confessing to crimes they did not commit.—*CPT*

Oswald, Sharp resign MC USA positions

Laurie L. Oswald

NEWTON, Kan.—Laurie L. Oswald, news service director for Mennonite Church USA, has resigned effective Oct. 26. She will become editor of *Timbrel*, the magazine of Mennonite Women, on Nov. 1.

She began as news service director in January 2002. Earlier she was on staff as a writer for *Mennonite Weekly Review*.

John Sharp

John Sharp, director of Mennonite Church USA's historical committee and historical archives in Goshen, Ind., resigned effective July 31. He began Aug. 1 at Hesston (Kan.) College, where he will write a centennial history of the school, which will celebrate its first 100 years in the 2009-10 school year. He will also teach history at Hesston.

Sharp began as director of the historical committee and historical archives in 1995.—*Gordon Houser*

Mennonite Men signs new donors at Charlotte

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—More than 200 men attended Mennonite Men's biennial dinner at Charlotte 2005 July 7. The binational organization raised $2,550 and signed up 26 new members for its JoinHands church-building program, which provides financial assistance to new congregations as they seek to buy or build their first meetinghouse.

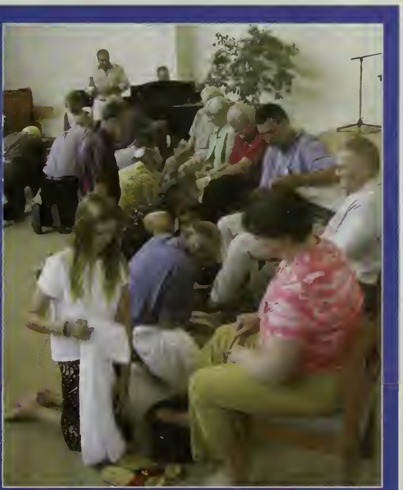
Chuck Goertz highlighted the evening with his account of how Church of God Prince of Peace, a poor Haitian congregation in Miami, came to purchase a meetinghouse.

Goertz, pastor of Homestead (Fla.) Mennonite Church and urban minister for Southeast Mennonite Conference, told how an abandoned Pizza Hut building became available. The owner wanted more than $200,000. After much effort, the congregation was only able to raise less than half that amount.

The owner rejected their offer, saying he had a buyer willing to pay the full amount. However, six area ministers walked around the building and prayed. That night, around 11:30, the owner called Hilaire Louis Jean, pastor of Church of God Prince of Peace, to say he couldn't sleep and asked for prayer. The next day he called again to say he would take a second mortgage and loan the church the remainder it needed to buy the building.

JoinHands has committed $35,000 to the Church of God Prince of Peace.—*Mennonite Men*

—compiled by Gordon Houser



Jim Bishop

Mennonites and Catholics share towel and basin

Mennonites and Catholics wash each other's feet in a closing worship ceremony July 24. Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., hosted the Bridgefolk Conference, an annual dialogue between Mennonites and Catholics that began in 1999 to build friendship. About 65 participants, mostly lay church members, took part in activities that included attending Mennonite and Catholic church services together in Harrisonburg. The informal, grass-roots Bridgefolk parallels a series of high-level ecumenical discussions that Bridgefolk organizers hope will spread to local churches.—*Chris Edwards*

IN BRIEF

Hotel Rwanda script wins Humanitas prize

The script of *Hotel Rwanda* won a Humanitas prize June 29 for being a spiritually driven Hollywood screenplay. Based on the heroics of a hotel manager during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the script brought a $25,000 prize to screenwriters Keir Pearson and Terry George. —*Christian Century*

David Bartel wins science award

David Bartel, a 1982 graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College, has been honored by the National Academy of Sciences with the 2005 Award in Molecular Biology, the French Academy of Sciences with the 2005 Louis D. Award and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as a biomedical investigator. The NAS award is accompanied by a $25,000 prize and has been presented "for a recent notable discovery in molecular biology by a young scientist" since 1962. Bartel, who teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is exploring how RNA molecules can act as catalysts and regulate gene expression in plant and animal cells.—*Goshen College*

Our primary form of public witness is our public practice. We cannot expect the nations to act in ways the church fails to act.

Why Mennonite Church USA should speak to government

by J. Daryl Byler

Given the controversy that it seems to spark, why should Mennonite Church USA even bother to witness to government? Our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective assumes we will. It speaks about two ways that we witness to governing authorities.

First, "by being that 'city on a hill' which demonstrates the way of Christ" (Article 23). That is to say, our primary form of public witness is our public practice. We cannot expect the nations to act in ways the church fails to act. So we witness by being a new creation in Christ that

- seeks the interests of others, not simply self-interest;
- shares rather than hoards;
- trusts God for its protection—not weapons of war;
- welcomes all people on equal footing, regardless of their race, ethnicity, economic status or gender.

Second, our confession says we "witness by being ambassadors for Christ, calling the nations … to move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people" (Article 23). Just as with evangelism, our example alone is not enough. Words are also necessary.

Let me offer four additional reasons we as Christians do well to speak to government.

If we believe Jesus is Lord of all, then his teaching and example are God's standard for human relationships and for the social order.

A paper presented to Mennonite Church USA's delegate assembly at Charlotte 2005 on speaking to government

1. Because it's biblical. The Bible is filled with stories about people of faith who resisted unjust laws and called rulers to act more justly.

- Shiphrah and Puah, Hebrew midwives, risked their lives when they refused Pharaoh's order to kill all the Hebrew baby boys (Exodus 1:15-22).
- Moses challenged Pharaoh to let the enslaved Hebrew people go into the desert to worship God (Exodus 4-12).
- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused King Nebuchadnezzar's order to bow down and worship his 90-foot golden statue (Daniel 3).
- Daniel continued to pray to God when King Darius ordered his subjects to pray only to the king (Daniel 6).
- Esther risked her life to plead the case of the Jewish people before the king (Esther 4-9).
- When the governing authorities demanded that the apostles relinquish their religious free speech, Peter responded, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29).

2. Because it's part of our Anabaptist theology and practice. Anabaptists begin with Jesus. Paul describes Jesus as both "head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18) and "head of every ruler and authority" (Colossians 2:10). If we believe Jesus is Lord of all, then his teaching and example are God's standard for human relationships and for the social order. Governing authorities may not acknowledge Christ, but this does not mean they are exempt from God's ways as revealed most fully in Jesus. And while we recognize the ordering role of government, Romans 13 is not a blanket license for governing authorities to do whatever they please or to use unlimited force. Rather, the "punish the wrongdoer" language of Romans 13 seems to envision a role for policing and judicial processes. It is hardly an endorsement for governments to go to war.

Menno Simons made this point. He supported the role of government in restraining evil but called for leaders to do so without shedding blood:

"Your task is to do justice between a man and his neighbor, to deliver the oppressed out of the hand of the oppressor; also to restrain by reasonable means, that is, without tyranny and bloodshed. … In this way, in all love, without force, violence and blood, you may enlarge, help and protect the kingdom of God with gracious consent and permission, with wise counsel and a pious, unblamable life" (*The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, p. 193).

In practice, North American Anabaptists have for many years spoken to government officials about issues such as military conscription that directly impact our congregations. So speaking to government is nothing new.

3. Because our global sisters and brothers are asking us to. If we are committed to loving neighbor as self, it's hard to explain why we would speak to government about issues that affect us (such as the draft) but would not speak to the government about issues that affect our global sisters and brothers.

Several years ago, Colombian Mennonites issued an urgent appeal to U.S. Mennonites, pleading as Mordecai pleaded with Esther, to intervene with governing authorities about a matter of life and death—in this case, U.S. military aid to Colombia:

"We plead with you, just as Esther did, to call together all believers and to fast and pray for the Holy Spirit to change the mind of your governors and to give strength and wisdom to members of Colombian churches so that we might console, offer hope and continue to take a message of life and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ to this people and this suffering church."

We are Christians living amid the world's lone economic and military superpower. And we live in a democracy where we have the opportunity to make our voice known. These two realities create a special responsibility for us.

4. Because church has prophetic imagination. People of faith see possibilities others cannot. Indeed, why would Christians want a public policy devoid of a moral voice? Paul says God's wisdom is made known to the rulers and authorities through the church (Ephesians 3:10). Congressional staffers have told me Mennonite workers coming back from international settings help them "think outside the box" and see alternative possibilities.

Is speaking to government our primary task as the church? Certainly not. Is it hard work agreeing what to say about which issues? You bet.

But is speaking to government an important part of our faithful witness to the Lordship of Christ? And a necessary part of our calling to love neighbor as self? I think the biblical answer is yes. And for that reason we dare not keep quiet.

May God's Spirit empower us to be that city on a hill that by its example offers compelling witness to the way of Christ. And may we be humble enough to listen to and learn from one another so that we may also find a more united voice in calling the nations to act justly and with compassion for all people.

J. Daryl Byler is director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office.

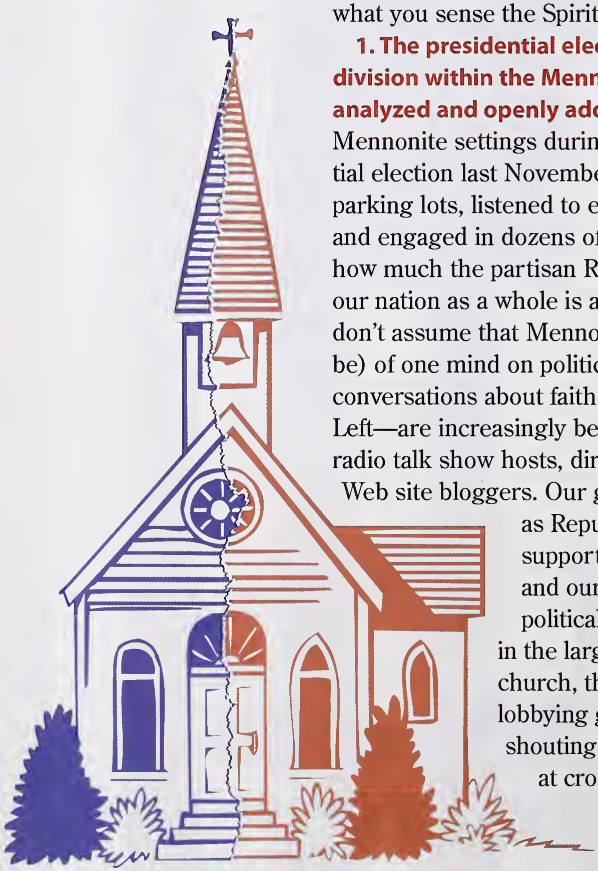
A deep past

by John D. Roth

Our apparent inability to distinguish our political witness from the entrenched divisions in the larger culture is an embarrassment to the church.

I appreciate Daryl Byler's comments and hope you consider my brief reflections less as a "rebuttal" to Daryl's reflections than as an expression of a deep pastoral concern for the health and unity of our church. I offer three observations or theses on speaking to government that have taken shape in my mind over the past year or two as I have traveled in many Mennonite congregations speaking on topics related to Christian pacifism and the gospel of peace. I invite you to test these observations with what you have experienced in your communities and what you sense the Spirit is saying to the church.

1. The presidential election campaign of 2004 revealed a deep division within the Mennonite church that should be named, analyzed and openly addressed. As I traveled in many different Mennonite settings during the months leading up to the presidential election last November—saw the bumper stickers in church parking lots, listened to encounters around coffee in the foyer and engaged in dozens of direct conversations—I was troubled by how much the partisan Red-Blue political chasm that has divided our nation as a whole is also evident within our congregations. I don't assume that Mennonites have ever been (or even should be) of one mind on political issues, but to an alarming degree our conversations about faith and politics—on both the Right and Left—are increasingly being co-opted by the polarized rhetoric of radio talk show hosts, direct mail campaigns, polemical ads and Web site bloggers. Our growing readiness to identify ourselves as Republicans or Democrats—as passionate supporters (or antagonists) of Bush or Kerry—and our apparent inability to distinguish our political witness from the entrenched divisions in the larger culture is an embarrassment to the church, threatening to make us simply one more lobbying group or political action committee shouting to be heard in the public square … often at cross-purposes with each other.



oral concern

A second paper presented to Mennonite Church USA's delegate assembly at Charlotte 2005 on speaking to government

2. Mennonite political activists on both the Left and Right are in danger of expecting far too much from government and far too little from the church. At the heart of the our understanding of Christian faith is conviction that the church is made up of believers who have voluntarily chosen to accept God's gracious love and commit themselves to follow the path of Jesus. The decision to follow Christ means that our primary allegiance, and the main focus of our engagement with the world, is the body of Christ, the church, a church that is made visible to the world by its distinctive practices of service, mutual aid, love and compassion for all human beings, including our enemies. Our tradition has long taught that we should respect and pray for those in government—indeed, the state has a divinely ordained role of preserving order ("punishing the evildoer and protecting the good"); it might even, tragically, use violence to do this. But the primary concern of Christians is not to redeem the state or take control of government or insist it live up to the standards of the New Testament.

To say our primary focus is the church rather than the state is not a romantic appeal to some separatist "purity" or a retreat into the safety of ethnic enclaves—just the opposite. Christ calls us to engage the messiness of a broken world, but we are to do this sacrificially and sacramentally—in a language and a method consistent with the gospel we proclaim. In a spirit of love and compassion rather than the politics of antagonism and fear.

3. My final point is a proposal or suggestion that may help us move forward in a more positive way: At the initiative of local congregations, ministers and conferences, Mennonites in the United States should commit themselves to a five-year sabbatical from affiliations with any political party. That is, we should publicly resolve to sit out the next presidential election and consciously abstain from all literature, Web sites, organizations and lobbying efforts supported by groups partisan to the Democrats or the Republicans. Choosing to withdraw from party-driven, partisan politics for the next five years has several clear advantages:

a. It offers both sides a conscious cooling-off period in which we symbolically acknowledge that our identity as brothers and sisters in the church matters more than our identity as supporters of a particular set of government policies.

b. It offers an occasion for a serious, sustained churchwide conversation about the nature of Christian witness in the public square;

c. It may allow us to develop a shared language for political witness that is rooted clearly and unmistakably within the framework of the church and our prior and primal allegiance to Jesus and the gospel. I don't assume the result of all this will be complete agreement, but we will be making a public witness for ourselves and to the world that the church—not the Democratic or Republican party—is our most fundamental point of reference.

What might we focus on during that five-year sabbatical? Local congregations would need to decide, but I suggest we start by cultivating spiritual practices that will keep our political witness rooted in Christ. Before Jesus began his intense, politically charged ministry he retreated to the wilderness for 40 days of testing. We would do well to begin with a disciplined period of spiritual retreat in which, as political activists on both the Left and the Right, we examine our motives, goals and methods.

Mennonites in the United States should commit themselves to a five-year sabbatical from affiliations with any political party.

If together we choose to be politically active during that five-year period, then I encourage us to focus on initiatives clearly rooted in the life of the church. For example, provide a safe house for young pregnant women in your community so that they know that they and their unborn child have the security of a loving and supportive community; develop partnership with sister congregations in Colombia or India or Indonesia; cultivate a global awareness through the lens provided by Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite World Conference and Mennonite Mission Network rather than by NPR or FOX.

And along the way, consciously nurture the fruits of the Spirit in your midst so that our shared witness to the world cannot help but reflect the love and compassion we bear for each other as brothers and sisters in the church. Above all, do not retreat from the pain and suffering of the world but let the healing of the world begin with the hard, joyful work of reconciliation in our congregations and in our church.

John D. Roth is professor of history at Goshen (Ind.) College.

Correction: The title of the poem "On Keeping Up the Place" (July 5, page 11) should not have been the first line of the poem. *The Mennonite* regrets this error.

A peace witness

by Victor J. Hinojosa

When did you last witness publicly for peace? In the run-up to the current war in Iraq, my wife and I were members of a Mennonite congregation in Indiana where we prayed, sang and marched. The war came anyway. In Colombia, the country I study as a political science professor, Christian Peacemaker Teams and other peace folks have regular public witnesses against the war, yet the war continues to take thousands of lives each year.

What do we do when we fail? What do we do when the war comes despite our protests? Does the witness of the peace church end when war begins? I want to suggest that there is a peace witness to be made in a time of war, and I offer these reflections from Colombia and the United States to suggest what that might look like.

The church must speak prophetically against nonstate terrorists, internal state violence and war.

First, a consistent peace witness calls us to speak prophetically against violence and warfare wherever it is. In the United States, this allows us to avoid the false dichotomies of the Bush administration: "You are with us or you are with the terrorists." The church must speak prophetically against nonstate terrorists, internal state violence and war.

A consistent peace witness is all the more critical in Colombia, where atrocities are committed by leftist guerrillas, right-wing paramilitary groups, narcotics traffickers and the Colombian state. The peace church must clearly and consistently condemn the violence of all sides. This allows the church to be a mediator in the conflict (a role the Catholic Church has played at various points).

It also is keeping people alive. The sanctuaries-of-peace movement involves entire communities declaring that they want no part of the armed conflict and that no armed actors (state or nonstate) are welcome in their towns. In a conflict in which each side kills anyone even suspected of being a sympathizer of the other side, this may be the only way to preserve neutrality—and preserve life. Reports I've seen suggest that this movement is dramatically reducing deaths and disappearances in these communities.

A second way the church can be distinctive is in working with the victims of violence. Here we do well. Whether it is sending relief kits to refugees in Afghanistan or Iraq or working with internally displaced peoples in Colombia, the peace church is doing great work with the victims of armed conflict. We must continue to feed and clothe the victims of violence. We must also take care of their long-term spiritual and psychological needs. The victims must not be left to deal with the emotional and psychological scars of war alone. We must also work to rebuild devastated societies. This work will be for the long-haul, but it is critical that infrastructure is rebuilt so that people are able to live better once the violence ends.

Correction: The name Little Bear Busenitz in "Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly" (July 26, page 13) should be Keshia Littlebear Busenitz. *The Mennonite* regrets this error.

in a time of war

Reflections from Colombia and the United States

Finally, and perhaps most distinctively, the peace church must work with the perpetrators of the violence. Both the war in Iraq and the internal conflict in Colombia will end, and the soldiers will come home. And they will have done horrible things. They will have committed, participated in and witnessed atrocities that you and I cannot imagine. A couple of examples: Colombian paramilitaries have been known to dismember people with chainsaws and then throw dance parties on the town soccer field after the massacre. The guerrillas have been known to lob homemade canister bombs into a church filled with refugees—women and children fleeing the combat zone. U.S. soldiers in Iraq have seen similar death and destruction.

When they return—scarred and laden with guilt—the peace church should offer something different from what others offer. The peace church won't say, "You were fighting for a good cause" or, "War is hell, but you did what you had to do." The peace church will not offer the justifications or rationalizations sure to ring hollow to one who has slaughtered innocent women and children.

Instead the peace church should offer something far better: a grace that redeems. A grace that says violence is never justified but is never the final word. A grace that says God is at work, even in the life of someone who has done great evil. A grace that requires honesty that evil must be confronted and named. Evil cannot be justified away, but there is a grace that redeems evil.

In northern Indiana, a group of local churches is beginning to work with veterans returning from Iraq. They are listening to personal stories and building relationships. Perhaps the networks of therapists, counselors and conflict specialists in our churches can begin ministering to the young men and women returning to our communities traumatized by the horror of war.

We must pray for these young men and women and for those reaching out to them. We must support this work in any way that we can. And we must pray that someday soon the church in Colombia will have a similar opportunity to work with former combatants.

We do not witness for peace believing that we will succeed. Sometimes nonviolence works, and we can celebrate those times. But far more often, the war comes anyway, and people continue to die. In late February, eight members of a peace community in Colombia, including several women and children, were tortured and murdered (allegedly by agents of the state). We of all people should expect this. For we know that faithful discipleship leads to the cross.

Yet we also know that sin and death do not have the final word. It is the reality of the resurrection that gives us the hope and the courage to witness faithfully even in such a time as this. May we find ways to join those in the United States and Colombia who are doing just that.

Victor J. Hinojosa teaches political science at Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

It is the reality of the resurrection that gives us the hope and the courage to witness faithfully even in such a time as this.

SEEK PEACE, AND PURSUE IT.
PSALMS 34:14

Birkey

Hope-filled

Believing both that God's kingdom is here and is to come can affect our lives.

by Carole Ricketts Walker

John the Baptist proclaimed, "The kingdom of God is at hand." Since then scholars and church officials have debated the theological significance of this statement. Is the kingdom temporal or special? Is it already here? Are we living in a "realized eschatology" or is it something to hope for—something bigger and beyond us in time and space—a "reserved eschatology"? I want to ask why it has to be one or the other. Can't both be theologically significant? Yes, I believe they can be. Both beliefs provide us and those around us with hope—and that is exactly why we should think and work out of both frameworks.

God's earthbound kingdom: I have some reservations believing the kingdom is fully realized here, but I believe it can help us in our Christian living, for if we base our actions around this idea, our lives will reflect it. The idea of God's kingdom on earth moves us, almost imperatively, to speak out when we see injustice, devastation and brokenness. Sometimes liberation theology is criticized for being too "earthbound." Liberation theologians tend to think more about the oppressive actions governments, races and individuals impose on others and how it ripples outward over time. They are committed to bring change on social levels and to each person. This earth-boundedness can benefit them because it has such an impact on their actions and decision making. They are empowered to bring change here and now and not simply believe things will get better in time or in the next life.

We, too, need to be empowered. The world is in need, and we can't sit back and watch anymore. Changes need to be made. Why not let it start with you and me? The world is broken and hurting. Countries are fighting wars, parts of the world are destroyed from the tsunami disaster and there are other heart-wrenching situations that make us want to place it all in God's capable hands and cry out, "Fix it, Lord." However, we need to own up to our responsibilities and be movers and shakers. Each person will have his or her own spheres of influence. Some people can influence a wider range of people, while others have their smaller circle of friends. Both are important. The latter group may be discouraged and ask, What good am I doing? We do not know how our words and lives will impact other people or institutions, so need not be discouraged but continue to have an impact on our corner of the world.

We do not know how our words and lives will impact other people or institutions, so need not be discouraged but continue to have an impact on our corner of the world.

eschatologies

How can our belief about God's kingdom, our eschatological framework, affect the world? When our convictions are above and beyond or completely opposite to what the world expects from us, we are giving the world a taste of God's kingdom. We can offer them samples from the rich banquet of God's order when we practice reconciliation, nonresistance and forgiveness. This is far from an exhaustive list. But these are three practices that make us different from the world around us.

When those outside our tradition and faith experience our outward statement of faith, they taste a bit of the kingdom. We hope it will make them hunger for more. The whole world is hungry. People need a healthy portion of God's grace and love. We can be agents in the world through our examples. We can only pray that the recipient of this grace extends this behavior and ideas to the next person and it continues outward. When we are moved to act as if the kingdom was here today, we offer hope for a better life for the people around us and beyond. Jesus is that hope.

The kingdom come: Certainly our eternal hope lies with our Creator. We believe Jesus has gone and prepared a room for us and we will someday go to be with him. I have to hold this to be true, with fevered hope. Some days this hope is what gets me through the day. I battle a chronic illness, a type of rheumatoid arthritis. On the days when my joints are crying out for relief as much as my spirit is, I remember that it won't always be like this. There will come a day when my pain will be taken away, my joints will find relief and I won't have to take so much medicine. I am reminded of Revelation 21:4: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." God's creation is in disorder. This disorder was not part of God's intended "shalom." When we visualize and look forward to God's eternal land of goodness, it is easier sometimes to battle our daily demons.

Thinking about another dimension of God's kingdom, rather than just here on earth, helps us when we are dealing with a situation in which we are severely limited in our changing. We need to carefully discern things we can change and things we cannot. I can change my involvement with violence when it comes to any war, but I cannot change my chronic illness. I can help make it better by taking care of my body, regularly seeing my specialist and taking an active role in my health. But I cannot change my circumstances, I cannot cure myself. That action and time is reserved for God.

When we visualize and look forward to God's eternal land of goodness, it is easier sometimes to battle our daily demons.

Realized eschatology and reserved eschatology don't have to be mutually exclusive. They can be held in tension with one another. They can be partners to help our individual Christian formation. Let our actions be guided by revealing God's kingdom here and now, offering hope to those who need it. Also, within ourselves and our congregations we can hold out that our room is reserved, and we are waiting to go there. Yes, we then are given the hope of better days to come.

Carole Ricketts Walker graduated in May from Goshen (Ind.) College in youth ministry. She will attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., this fall. She works at Topeka (Ind.) Mennonite Church with the junior and senior high school youth.

The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation by Barbara R. Rossing (Westview Press, 2004, $24) pulls no punches in its critique of the many books promoting a rapture theology. She calls it "a racket ... that distorts God's vision for the world." A New Testament scholar and ordained Lutheran minister, Rossing spends the first half of this readable book dismantling the idea of a rapture made popular by Hal Lindsey and the Left Behind series of novels as unbiblical and heretical. She shows its history, its weaknesses in interpreting Scripture and its destructive consequences in the Middle East. The second half of the book offers an interpretation of the Book of Revelation that takes seriously its historical setting and how it can be applied to faith today. "Revelation," she writes, "is not about an inevitable doomsday for the earth" but "about seeing the Lamb beside you in every moment of your life." In an epilogue she looks at the major passages used to support a rapture theory and debunks that interpretation. She has done her homework. It's too bad more people won't read her book than already read the Left Behind fictions.—*Gordon Houser*

Breaking and entering

by Michael Martin

You have heard,
and verily I say unto you now—
Is it not written that Christ will come
as a thief in the night?
I tell you again, truly he will come
as a thief,
jimmying the lock on your back door
under cover of night,
tiptoeing on cats-feet to the living room,
lifting your artwork from the walls,
rifling the best of your CD collection
and pinching your stereo
as his angel buddies giggle in the
dark of the driveway—
hot-wiring your car.
Surely he will take your treasures,
but fear not—
for if you call upon his name,
will he not return again
in the brightness of morning,
wearing different clothes,
to see if your heart too
has left with the loot?

*Michael Martin lives
in Greencastle, Pa.*

Finding pulse

by Earl Martin

to Pat

Remember how you placed your lips
upon her lips to blow the soul
back in her pulseless little frame?
But the random bullet took its toll.
Or when your gentle fingers closed
the eyelids of the mountain man
who'd been choppered down from hillside home
and left to die amid his broken clan?
On other nights you'd press your lips
to mine in passion full ablaze.
Your pulsing fingers touched me where
my members danced as in a craze.
Sometimes the heart declares belief
that hope will trump the deepest grief.

Earl Martin, who with Pat, his wife, served with Mennonite Central Committee in Vietnam, attends Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Harrisonburg, Va.

Why we enlist in the military

Becky Oberg attends First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis.

Imagine you're trapped in a dead-end, low-wage job with no prospect for promotion. A man comes along and says that in exchange for a few years of your life he will give you steady employment, up to $15,000 as a signing bonus, an excellent item to place on your resumé, competitive job training and help paying for higher education. If you're like me, you'll take the recruiter up on his offer and enlist in the military—in my case, the Army.

While some enlist in the military to serve their country, many of my buddies and I enlisted for one or more of the following reasons: to get money for college or graduate school, to pay off college loans, to get job training.

We're not told that, according to the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, two-thirds of all recruits never get money for college, and only 15 percent graduate with a four-year degree. Neither are we told that we contribute $100 a month for our first year in service (you learn this once you sign the contract) or that the current help is $1,004 a month for full-time students for up to 36 months, according to www.military.com.

Some people enlist to pay off college loans. In April 2002, NBC2 reported on the death of Army Ranger Marc Anderson, who had joined the military as an enlisted man rather than an officer to repay $45,000 in college loans. Anderson left $12,000 to a former student so she would not have to do the same thing.

Some people join the military for job training. According to www.todaysmilitary.com, "Every year, the Armed Services hire a combined 365,000 people in more than 4,100 different job paths. Many of these jobs are similar to those found in the civilian world. That means military servicepeople [sic] often enter the private sector as highly experienced and sought-after candidates."

That sounds tempting until you learn that a military certification is not always valid in the civilian world and that you may have to get training all over again. And the military is not required to keep you full-time in the job you're trained in or to keep you in said job during your enlistment.

Not surprisingly, the fact that we're going to be trained killers doesn't come up in the sales pitch. Or that we're going to be required to chant a cadence similar to, "What is the spirit of the bayonet? To kill, kill, kill without mercy. What makes the green grass grow? Blood, blood makes the green grass grow. What makes the green grass green? Guts, guts make the green grass green. Who carries the bayonet? The quick and the dead. Who are we? The quick. Who are they? The dead."

It is not uncommon for individuals to have second thoughts once they've started serving. In 2003, the GI Rights Hotline received nearly 29,000 calls from soldiers wanting to leave their posts. Some realize they are opposed to all war because they are revolted by the cadences, which include lines like, "My buddy's in a foxhole, bullet through his head, the medic said he's wounded, but I know that he's dead. Airborne Rangers! Shoot the son of a, shoot the son of a, shoot the son of a, whoo!" Some of us simply can't adapt to giving up our rights and being ordered around. Some simply decide they cannot in good conscience follow certain orders.

Unfortunately, once you have reported for training, it is extremely difficult to get discharged from the military. When I was in the Army, one individual shot himself in the foot to get out, which resulted in a criminal charge of destruction of government property. Some commit suicide. Some desert; the Pentagon reports that 5,500 service members have deserted since the beginning of the Iraq War. Some become conscientious objectors; the number has skyrocketed since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Some get sick or injured, many of whom had preexisting conditions they were pressured by the recruiter to forget about.

Many people, myself included, do not complete their entire enlistment. Some of us come out questioning our service, feeling guilty about not finishing our term or about what we did while in the Army (for example, I was ordered to look the other way when some threats were made against soldiers with attitude problems who were getting all of us in trouble; I obeyed out of fear I was next if something happened). Some of us are proud to have served, though not proud of everything we did. All we ask is for understanding. Some of us feel we were conned; some of us don't. Many of us are just ordinary people trying to get ahead in life, and while we may not understand Mennonites' commitment to nonviolence, we do understand compassion. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Play is not the opposite of work**—Lynn Miller
- **Bearing fruit in old age**—Martha Kolb-Wyckoff

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonites pray for Zimbabweans

Government-sponsored 'cleanup' destroys thousands of homes, businesses.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Zimbabwe have lost their homes after a government "cleanup" operation. Many are sleeping in the open in what is the coldest time of the year. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, was the site of the Mennonite World Conference assembly in 2003.

In response to the suffering in Zimbabwe, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is providing funds for 5,000 blankets to shelter homeless families, and Mennonite World Conference called Anabaptist and MWC-related congregations across the globe to a July 24 day of prayer for Zimbabwe's current situation and an impending drought and economic hardship.

Conservative estimates indicate that 250,000 people have been displaced since late May, when Zimbabwe police and army personnel began Operation Murambatsvina ("Restore Order/Clean Up"), according to Action by Churches Together (ACT).

The government has stated the campaign targeted illegal and informal businesses, purportedly illegal structures and houses, street children, homeless people, street traders and foreign-currency dealers. Government officials have promised to address the housing crisis. The demolition of shelters and market stalls and the removal of informal traders began in Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, and spread to major cities like Bulawayo and across the nation. Even before demolitions began, Zimbabwe was facing a drought, almost no harvest and a collapsed economy. According to ACT, demolitions destroyed the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people at a time when Zimbabwe's unemployment rate is estimated at 70 percent.

"In Bulawayo as in all the other towns, many of us watched helplessly as the vendors fled while their stalls were destroyed and their wares confiscated," report MCC Zimbabwe representatives Doris and Jethro Dube.

"The nights are very cold. Some of the people sleep in the open. We just need to do something as soon as possible," reports Bishop Danisa Ndlovu, Brethren in Christ Church of Zimbabwe and MWC vice president. "These people have many needs, as some lost everything, including clothes."

MCC is providing some $60,000 to purchase and distribute the blankets to people being assisted by churches in Bulawayo. The blankets will be purchased in Zimbabwe.

MCC and Bishop Ndlovu worked together with churches in Bulawayo to develop the project, which will be carried out in July and August by a Christian task force that was set up to respond to the needs of the displaced people.

The Brethren in Christ Church in the United States has provided $5,000 to the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe for emergency relief, and MWC officials report a number of inquiries from people who want to respond to needs in Zimbabwe.

Everett J Thomas

During Mennonite World Conference's Assembly Gathered in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in August 2003, dozens of local Brethren in Christ women prepared food in cooking pots outside for thousands of participants.

MWC asked Anabaptist congregations across the globe to join Zimbabwe churches in prayer on July 24 for the nation and those who have been displaced.

"Prayer changes things. In the midst of the many challenges that this our nation is going through we pray that God will demonstrate that he is God … show us the great and mighty things which we do not know. … God's will, will always be the best for us," Ndlovu says.

Ndlovu

Ndlovu notes he was moved that a late June interdenominational prayer meeting at Bulawayo Central Brethren in Christ Church brought Catholics, Baptists, Lutherans, Evangelicals and Pentecostals together to pray for the country and displaced people.—*Mark Beach of MCC*

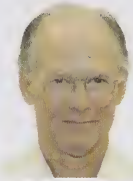
Boyertown Mennonite Church responds

Mennonite Church USA declared July 24 a day of prayer for the persecuted people of Zimbabwe, so we at Boyertown (Pa.) Mennonite Church shared this with the congregation. June Shenk introduced the needs of the country by leading us in a time of guided prayer that related to several different needs in Zimbabwe. Following the prayer she invited everyone to drop their change in a basket at the back of the sanctuary as they exited. Much to our surprise and joy, we received $373.54 from the 92 people in attendance. Praise God for his willing servants.—*Nelson Shenk*

Accidents kill two mission workers

Shenk with EMM and MCC in East Africa, Hertzler with EMM in Thailand

Joe Shenk, a longtime Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker in East Africa, died July 21 in Nairobi General Hospital in Kenya. He was 67 years old. Shenk, who was serving as principal of Mennonite Theological College of East Africa in Musoma, Tanzania, died almost two weeks after being struck by a large charcoal truck near Musoma on July 9. Shenk, an avid runner who was out for a morning jog when he was hit, was airlifted from Tanzania to Nairobi, where he died of complications from his injuries.

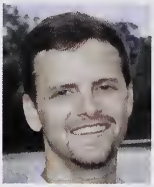


Shenk

"Joe's ministry has spanned six decades of the Mennonite churches in Tanzania and Kenya," says Clair Good, EMM representative to Africa. "Born and raised in Tanzania as the second son of pioneer Mennonite missionaries Clyde and Alta Shenk, he returned as a young adult to help train leaders in the church his parents had helped plant. During this last term of service he has worked as a peer alongside many of his former students, now the leaders in the church and community."

Shenk's wife, Edith, served with him in a joint leadership training position of EMM and MCC. Shenk wrote two books on the Tanzanian Mennonite Church and mission history. He served with EMM in Tanzania and Kenya from 1962 until 1982, also holding a position as MCC East Africa country representative in Nairobi, Kenya, in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

John Hertzler, 36, an EMM missionary to Thailand, died July 24 in a traffic accident while traveling by motorcycle from his home in Det Udom to the monthly joint meeting of the Thai house churches in Palanchai. Glenn Kauffman, EMM representative to Asia, traveled to Thailand July 25 to join John's wife, Janelle (Shantz), and 1-year-old son, Micah, and the Thai mission team and church for the memorial service there.



Hertzler

"We are praying for Janelle and Micah, the Hertzler and Shantz families and the Thai mission team and churches as we together grieve this unanticipated departure of a beloved brother," says Richard Showalter, EMM president. "John has given exemplary service in supporting the development of an emerging circle of house churches among the Isaan people of Thailand in counsel, encouragement and intercessory prayer."

Hertzler began service with EMM in 1987 as a member of a Youth Evangelism Service team to Belize and in 1990 with YES in Costa Rica. From 1993-98 he served with EMM in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, teaching at Pine Grove Academy. In 1999 he led a YES team to Thailand. He was a member of Hopewell Christian Fellowship of Elverson, Pa., and the son of Truman and Virginia Hertzler.—*from MCC and EMM*

Cornelia Lehn: editor, author, storyteller

Helped create and promote Foundation Series Sunday school curriculum

Lehn

Cornelia (Nellie) Lehn, former editor for the Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church (GC), died July 2 in Clearbrook, B.C.

Lehn attended Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, and Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. She earned a master's degree in journalism at the University of Iowa.

As director of children's ministries for GC, Lehn worked out of the former denomination's Newton, Kan., office and was instrumental in the nurture of children in her work as editor of the Foundation Series Sunday school material. She traveled extensively in North America, South America and Germany to promote the material.

Lehn was not only a writer but a gifted storyteller. During her time in Newton she was also commissioned to write several books, some of which have been translated into other languages: *God Keeps His Promise*; *Peace Be With You*; *I Heard Good News Today* and *The Sun and the Wind*. Lehn also wrote *The Homemade Brass Plate*, the biography of Mary Jackson, a pioneer doctor from northern Alberta. Lehn's last work involved considerable research and resulted in *Frontier Challenge: the Story of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia* (now Mennonite Church BC).

Lehn was born Dec. 15, 1920, in Leonadawka, Ukraine, the youngest of five daughters of Gerhard Lehn and Sara, nee Ens. Her parents and their four daughters immigrated to Hanley, Sask., in 1926. In 1941, the family moved to British Columbia, where Lehn became a member of Greendale Mennonite Church.—*First Mennonite Church of Greendale, B.C.*

A tsunami of contributions for MCC

Dec. 26, 2004, tragedy in Indian Ocean sparked record for single event.

The Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami that ravaged much of southern Asia and the east coast of Africa was never far from the center of discussions at the annual general meeting of Mennonite Central Committee in June. That event was pivotal in shaping MCC's year and the meeting agenda.

Don Peters, MCC Canada executive director, said the three weeks following the tsunami "were the most intense days we've experienced. People were lined up to make donations. Volunteers were needed and came because staff couldn't meet the demands."

MCC received the largest influx of money for any single event in its history. "We sensed more deeply the great degree of responsibility and accountability that comes with this support," Peters said.

MCC's history of involvement in the area gave integrity to its responses."No one was confusing MCC aid with political involvement or interference," said Erin Morash, MCC board member.

MCC will be using tsunami relief funds over the next three to five years to help with the rebuilding program in the region affected. A large percentage of the donations were from first-time MCC supporters and nontraditional supporters, said Ron Loeppky, MCC Manitoba executive director.

"This raises questions of what will happen to the larger support base," Loeppky said, "and are we still going to remain the same MCC we've always been?"

While it was clear that the tsunami did bring the work of MCC to new levels, one longtime MCC supporter and observer expressed the hope that this would not overshadow MCC's responses to needs elsewhere in the world, including MCC's 60 years of involvement in Israel-Palestine. Typically, MCC's involvement has been with displaced people—Palestinians—but discussion included the possibility of partnering with others, including Israeli peace groups.

"We agreed that the conflict situation is not being resolved in this region, and that is a real concern," Vernon Jantzi said. "We need alternative ways to address this issue."

Interfaith bridge-building also stirred lively discussion. Increasingly, MCC's work brings it alongside organizations and agencies from other faiths.

"There is a concern for respecting other faiths and differences but also wanting to come with a strong desire to bear witness to our faith," said Laura Schmidt Roberts. "We serve as a result of our faith. It is a genuine starting point—an unapologetic ownership of our faith."

One workshop reviewed the 50 years of the Mennonite church work in Vietnam and how the current political situation has created new complexities and suffering for the Mennonite churches in that country.

Following a report from Mennonite World Conference, new guidelines for MCC's partnership with this organization were outlined. MWC's David Wiebe expressed appreciation for the new partnership.

"The ties will help keep MCC close to the church and will be an integral part of our experience," he said.

The MCC board also looked at a new memorandum of understanding in its relationship with Ten Thousand Villages, which is looking to take advantage of the booming $6 billion gift market in the United States and the need to supply the rising middle classes in such countries as India and Vietnam.

In closing comments, J.M. Klassen, first executive secretary of MCC Canada, said: "MCC operates on a high level of trust. That level of trust is a precious capital that MCC has to guard with transparency, integrity and compassion. MCC receives a passing grade on all counts."—*Evelyn Rempel Petkau for Meetinghouse*

This raises questions of what will happen to the larger support base, and are we still going to remain the same MCC we've always been?—Ron Loeppky

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Vietnamese church gets mixed messages

Government actions cause confusion, create tensions for Mennonite leaders.

Recent reports from Vietnam give some hope of lowering tensions between government authorities and Mennonite churches at various levels, while at the same time hostile actions continue elsewhere. Church leaders interpret the signs of the times differently as well, and tensions over these issues continue within the church.

A pastor on the central Vietnam coast was called in to the local security police office in June and told that city and provincial officials do not want to hinder their house churches' worship, which has long gone on illegally. Officials now stand ready to respond in positive ways to lessen the difficulties the churches have faced.

> A major concern of the government is political insecurity over rapid growth in the number of evangelical believers among ethnic minority groups.

Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung reports that in July the Ho Chi Minh City Office of Religious Affairs told him his long-standing application for national legal status for the denomination has progressed to a new stage. Trung has submitted a constitution as the next step toward recognition, to be followed by an official organizing conference. The same notification has been extended to three other groups: Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist and World Evangelization Crusade.

On July 19, a building in District 2 of Ho Chi Minh City that has served as a place of worship and an office for the Vietnam Mennonite Church was partially demolished by local authorities (see box). City officials have long maintained a portion of it was built illegally. Mrs. Le Thi Phu Dung, wife of imprisoned church leader Nguyen Hong Quang, lives on the second floor with her three children.

A baptistry at the rear of the building now lies in ruins, and a large hole gapes in the back corner of the structure. The leaders of this house church are distraught at this evidence of ongoing hostility toward the Mennonite church.

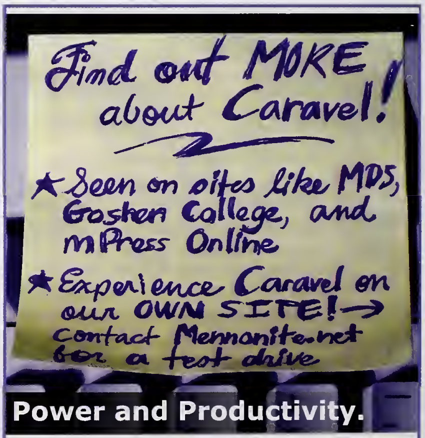
Vietnam has been under international scrutiny over its intrusive monitoring of religious groups. Since November 2004, the government has proclaimed several national-level changes intended to lessen criticism of its heavy hand in "managing" organized religion. Conversations with officials indicate that a major concern of the government is political insecurity over rapid growth in the number of evangelical believers among ethnic minority groups, who have long been at the margins of Vietnamese culture. A majority of the Mennonites in Vietnam are ethnic minority peoples.

Strong public advocacy for the plight of minority groups and minority Christians by pastor Nguyen Hong Quang and several other Mennonite leaders in recent years may be a major underlying factor in government hostility toward some Mennonite churches. Of the six Mennonite leaders and church workers arrested in 2004, two remain in prison: pastor Quang and evangelist Nguyen Ngoc Thach. Four have been released, some after serving their full sentences. An amnesty in April 2005 resulted in the release of Miss Nguyen Thi Lien, whose prison experiences led to serious mental illness. She has experienced a return to health, for which her family and church are grateful to God.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Vietnamese church building destroyed

On July 19, Ho Chi Minh City officials demolished an eight- by five-meter portion of the 1999 two-story home of the Rev. Nguyen Hong Quang family, including four meters of the room where the Mennonite Church of Vietnam holds weekly worship services. In an interview later that day, Le Thi Phu Dung, Quang's wife, said the local authorities entered the house, read the order, then forced students living there to go to the street. They took her and the two youngest children to the loft to observe their demolition plans. Those doing the demolition said, "Please sympathize with us; we are only hired hands doing this because we need food on our tables. We don't want to destroy the church and we will be very careful not to destroy the church's property."

Quang, general secretary of Vietnam Mennonite Church, was arrested in June 2004 following a March incident and charged with interfering with people carrying out official duties. He and five others were convicted last November, and Quang was sentenced to three years imprisonment. He is now in a prison in Dak Lak province. When Pastor Quang was arrested, local authorities ordered that all activities at the center cease.—*MWC*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Continued from page 5

the discerning community would continue to dialogue on the subject of homosexuality. For some time now *The Mennonite* has permitted no dialogue in its pages. How can you have discernment without dialogue?—*Donald and Elsie Steelberg, Wichita, Kan.*

I appreciated Everett J. Thomas' editorial ("Rules Help Discernment," June 21), in which he upholds the necessary role of rules and procedures. No community can exist without them. The observation that Mennonite Church USA is dealing with difficult discernment issues much better than in the recent past is also useful. We can rightfully celebrate such progress. What I'd like Thomas to do now is address the necessary role of dissent.

For any community to be healthy, space must be provided for challenge and dissent. Without such structures, a community stagnates, and we limit the ways the Spirit of God can create something new. A community such as ours that began because we perceived God calling people to new visions of faithfulness, not the maintenance of the status quo, can surely do more than rely on rules and procedures—good as these might be. Together we must do the equally arduous work of making open spaces for the Spirit's ongoing work of creating something new.—*Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind.*

The June 21 editorial begs for a word from the past. "But all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40) was often appealed to by bishops and bishop boards of the old church to justify the rules and regulations that kept women modest and submissive. Women in ministry, musical instruments, wedding bands, insurance and such were ruled out as indecent and disorderly by a dysfunctional system of governance. When renewed, the old Mennonite church slowly learned respect for its fringe churches and allowed their innovative discernment to benefit the mainstream.

The editor turned the spotlight on a few recent restrictions imposed by two conferences and a corporation. These examples of governance were interpreted as a strength, but to me they are a return to the old era of weakness and ungrace. I question the value of the tradition that considers rules necessary. A centuries-long trail of broken relationships caused by the use of rules to keep things done decently and in order should be a warning, not a model.—*Martin W. Lehman, Sarasota, Fla.*

In "Rules Help Discernment," I am willing to accept the three documents Thomas cites (Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Mennonite Church USA's membership guidelines, and *A Polity for Mennonite Leadership*) as guidelines but not as rules. Thomas cites the Mennonite confession of faith as "the bedrock upon which our discernment begins." I claim the Word of God, as communicated in the Bible and in Jesus, as the bedrock upon which our discernment begins. That discernment is always in process and never complete in this life, because as humans we "see as through a glass dimly." I remember vividly how the writing of a new confession of faith was met with concern that it be used as a creed or litmus test. Let us not use it that way.—*Cynthia Neufeld Smith, Topeka, Kan.*

Thomas' editorial "Rules Help Discernment" praises Mennonite Church USA for providing us with the documents that now fame our sexuality discussions and actions. But the very documents Thomas cites have made it more difficult for us to be faithful to Jesus Christ and his teachings. One of the situations Thomas describes is that of our congregation, Hyattsville Mennonite Church, that has been "judged by its conference to be inconsistent with Mennonite Church USA guidelines" in its acceptance into membership of some individuals who are committed to same-sex relationships.

The effort to follow a guideline of Mennonite Church USA has revealed how impossible a burden it is for us to follow these guidelines as stated. The guideline in question states that marriage is reserved for "one man and one woman," and that this relationship is "for life." Any congregation now accepting divorcees is also "inconsistent" with the teaching of the church. Is it really a sign of greater strength in the church to draw up statements that are subsequently used selectively and inconsistently for purposes of disciplining congregations?
—*Melvin D. Schmidt, Hyattsville, Md.*

Our confession of faith "is now the bedrock upon which our discernment begins" ("Rules Help Discernment" June 21)? Even the New Testament writers don't claim that label for their inspired work. I'm reminded of Menno Simons' much-quoted favorite text: "For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ." If Jesus is our foundation, our most recent confession of faith can't be the bedrock below him. I read the concluding paragraph to discover that our faith tradition has "believed for nearly 500 years that the church is the discernment community—and has ultimate authority to determine what is right and wrong." It seems to me that our early Anabaptist forebears rose up in protest against just such arrogant claims by the church as they knew it, saying unequivocally that their allegiance and obedience could legitimately be given to no one other than God.—*Linda Nafziger-Meiser, Boise, Idaho*

Note: Due to space limitations, we can print only portions of some of the letters we received in response to the June 21 editorial. Generally, letters were selected for publication by the order they arrived and if they offered a point not made by other letter-writers.—*Editor*

CALENDAR

Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, ***21st Annual Quilt Auction,*** Sept. 10 at the Redeemer Lutheran Church Center, 345 S. Kenilworth Rd., Elmhurst, IL. All proceeds to benefit Chicago Mennonite Learning Center. For more information call 773-735-9304 or visit www.chicagoquilts.com.

Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society announces the ***MCC Quilts Exhibit*** will be on display at the Illinois Heritage Center Aug. 12-14 and Aug. 19-21. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fri. and Sat. and 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sun. The exhibit accompanies a new book entitled *Passing on the Comfort: The War, the Quilts, and the Women Who Made a Difference*. For more information about the exhibit, contact Lori Graber at 309-244-8490 or email mlgraber@dtnspeed.net.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation"*, Aug. 23-25, Lombard, Ill. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"Healthy Congregations"*, Sept. 23-24, Deerfield, Ill. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training"*, Sept. 26-28, Lombard, Ill. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

MARP-sponsored sixth annual ***"Aging with Spirit Retreat"***, Oct. 2-4, 2005 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. J. Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and others will speak to the themes of health and fitness, physical and spiritual. Plan now to attend this fall gathering of "spirited" older adults. Call Laurelville at 800-839-1021 for more information and to register for this event.

***Second Crossroads Address*, Sunrise Church of the Brethren**, 1496 S. Main St., Harrisonburg, VA, Aug. 27, 7:30 p.m. Local historian Nancy Bondurant Jones will share insights on the life of Roberta Webb and her contributions to church and community life. An offering will be received in support of the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center.

Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center (CrossRoads), *summer vesper services*, through August. Enjoy the serenity of Sunday evenings in a shady woodland setting with music and mediations that will inspire you. At the top of the CrossRoads hill, follow the 100-foot trail down a gently sloping hillside to the amphitheater. Bring a chair to sit on. Services begin at 7 p.m. In case of rain, meet in the restored Whitmer Schoolhouse nearby.

Values-Based Leadership Program, two-session event, **Laurelville Mennonite Church Center**, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. First session "Leading from the Inside" takes place Sept. 19-21, 2005. Second session, "Leading and Empowering Others", is scheduled for Feb. 15-17, 2006. Sponsored by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mennonite Church USA Executive Board, Mennonite Economic Development Associates, MHS Alliance, MMA and Schmucker Training and Consulting. For more information call 800-839-1021 or 724-423-2056, email IAL@Laurelville.org or visit the Web site www.laurelville.org/IAL.

WORKERS

Harms, Loanne, was ordained June 12 as youth pastor at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Hartzler, Bob, ended June 1 as interim pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Martin, Gary, ended June 30 as interim pastor at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Yoder, Helen, was ordained June 26 as associate pastor at West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Zimmerman, John, began July 1 as pastor at Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Alderfer, Jonathan Andrew, April 21, to Andrew and Laura Leatherman Alderfer, Telford, Pa.

Beck, Jaret Levi and Leah Renee (twins), to Reggie and April King Beck, Wauseon, Ohio.

Carr, Justin Boyd, June 20, to Noah and Stephanie Holsopple Carr, Mt. Jackson, Va.

Davis, Jett Logan, July 6, to Kip and Carrie Davis, Normal, Ill.

Detweiler, Justin Samuel, July 2, to Marc and Jody Sensenig Detweiler, Harleysville, Pa.

Eicher-Miller, Amelia Giselle, May 3, to Kirk and Heather Eicher-Miller, Lafayette, Ind.

Elizarraraz, Emilio Sebastian, May 31, to Roberto and Janet Trevino Elizarraraz, San Antonio, Texas.

Entz, Camryn Elizabeth, June 9, to Alan and Joan Siebert Entz, Newton, Kan.

Epp, Kennedy Katherine, June 6, to Matthew and Jennifer Kline Epp, Papillion, Neb.

Meet AAI team member
J. Daniel Hess, associate

Communication has been Dan's life-long interest. A professor at Goshen College for more than 30 years, Dan now consults in communication issues and supports the AAI staff in other contracts. He holds a PhD from Syracuse University.

Other AAI team members: Jerry Kennell, Rich Gerig, Pat Swartzendruber, Michael Wiese and Becky Drumm.

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Fecho, Laura Eve and Maya Rose (twins), June 25, to Robert and Rachel Wilson Fecho, Norristown, Pa.

Fickert, Nathan Christopher, June 2, to Michael and Kelly McDonough Fickert, Souderton, Pa.

Friesen, Jacob Aspen Zook, May 17, to Phil Friesen and Brenda Zook, Baltimore, Md.

Fruits, Taya Louise, July 1, to Scott and Carey Delagrange Fruits, Grabill, Ind.

Gerlach, Jakob Chase, July 11, to Jason and Wendy Houser Gerlack, Harrisonburg, Va.

Godshall, Kayla Marie, Aug. 23, 2004, received for adoption June 17 by Troy and Sabrina Derstine Godshall, Harleysville, Pa.

Godshall, Trevor Konstantin, June 10, 2003, received for adoption June 17 by Troy and Sabrina Derstine Godshall, Harleysville, Pa.

Greve, Landon Andrew, June 13, to Bret and Kathryn Graber Greve, Lake Park, Iowa.

Grieser, Ryan Nathaniel, June 16, to Matthew and Anna Rhodes Grieser, New Castle, Ind.

Holland, Colton Avery, July 20, to Jeremey and Sherra Whetzel Holland, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hostetler, Isabelle Marie, March 10, to Jason and Brenda Smucker Hostetler, Orrville, Ohio.

Janzen, Jude Ruth, June 27, to Jeremy and Jennifer Ruth Janzen, Olepolos, Nairobi.

Landis, Trinity Evonne, July 15, to Eric and Tracy Landis, Quakertown, Pa.

Lefever, Kate Likai, Sept. 5, 2004, received for adoption June 26 by Rodney and Lauri Hoober Lefever, Lancaster, Pa.

Lehman, Noah Levi, June 2, to Nathan and Michelle Nicoletti Lehman, Boswell, Pa.

Martin, Hannah Ruth, June 10, to Timothy and Dawn Tomczak Martin, Reinholds, Pa.

Mast, Mattie Anna, June 24, to Joseph and Marie Johnston Mast, Millersburg, Ohio.

Mattson, Mackenzie, April 23, to Joel Strauss and Trisha Mattson, Boyertown, Pa.

Miller, Corban Azariah, June 8, to Patrick and Emily Miller, Millersburg, Ohio.

Miller, Grant Jackson, July 13, to Bill and Raquel Miller, Millersburg, Ohio.

Miller, Tyler Douglas, June 18, to Douglas and Amber Verheyen Miller, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Nafziger, Vivian Therese, June 8, to Jeff and Kate Nafziger, Chicago, Ill.

Neufeld, Mikayla Christina Shantz, July 3, to John and Andrea Neufeld Shantz, Kitchener, Ont.

Penner, Addison Elizabeth, May 18, to Bryan and Karri Krehbiel Penner, Newton, Kan.

Reimer, Ella Mae, May 27, to Gregory and Amy Estrada Reimer, Newton, Kan.

Reimer, Henry David, July 15, to Philip Lund and Julia Reimer, St. Paul, Minn.

Riegsecker, Kailey Nicole, July 11, to Jason and Erika McSorley Riegsecker, Bristol, Ind.

Sawatzky, Moses Joseph Liechty, May 26, to Joseph and Anna Liechty Sawatzky, Goshen, Ind.

Schmidt, Eric Michael, June 10, to Phil and Marla Schmidt, Baltimore, Md.

Stutzman, Wesley Michael, May 20, to Travis and Misty Ferrell Stutzman, Newton, Kan.

Waltner, Samuel Haney, June 25, to Kyle and Polly Graber Waltner, Freeman, S.D.

Waltner, Sierra Ruth, July 1, to Ryan and Sarah Rensink Waltner, Tea, S.D.

Weaver, Elsa Ruth, June 21, to Kevin and Letitia Lefever Weaver, Reinholds, Pa.

Zerger, Brock Ryan, July 12, to Neil and Ginny Stohs Zerger, Wichita, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Alhman/Niebuhr: Kyle Alhman, Wayland, Iowa, and Megan Niebuhr, Perry, Iowa, June 11 in Perry.

Baer/Perez: Tiffany Marie Baer, Fort Hill, Pa., and J.R. Perez, Friendsville, M.D., May 14 at Springs (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Beachy/Schlabach: Megan Beachy, Hartville, Ohio, and Joel Schlabach, Hartville, June 10 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Berry/Switzer: Bonnie Berry, Dalton, Ohio, and Andy Switzer, Charlottesville, Va., July 2 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron, Ohio.

Birky/Welborn: Matthew Birky, Foosland, Ill., and Ashley Welborn, Dewey, Ill., June 18 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Bottger/Kramer: Joan Bottger, Hubbard, Neb., and Jarrod Kramer, Freeman, S.D., July 2 in Hubbard.

Cox/Miller: Sarah Cox, Germantown, Ohio, and Ethan Miller, Millersburg, Ohio, June 18 at Cherry Street United Methodist Church, Germantown.

Dunster/Weaver: Cole Dunster, Kidron, Ohio, and Jennifer Weaver, Kidron, June 25 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Gehman/Halteman: Chad M. Gehman, Hatfield, Pa., and Monica J. Halteman, Harleysville, Pa., June 25 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville.

Goings/Lehman: Tyson Goings and Andrea Lehman, Bluffton, Ohio, June 25 at Trinity United Methodist Church, Lima, Ohio.

Goldcamp/Scheetz: Michael Goldcamp, Schwenksville, Pa., and Amanda Scheetz, Harleysville, Pa., June 25 at Alderfer Homestead, Harleysville.

Graber/Lee: Holly Graber, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, and Adam Lee, Wayland, Iowa, June 4 at Wayland Mennonite Church.

Grieser/Osterland: Lisa Grieser, Archbold, Ohio, and Ben Osterland, Ohio, June 11 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Hall/Whiteman: Andy Hall, Texarkana, Texas, and Beth Whiteman, Houston, Texas, June 4 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Hoover/Kulp: Jonathan Hoover, Schwenksville, Pa., and Karrie Kulp, Flourtown, Pa., March 19 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Horst/King: Stephanie Horst, Lancaster, Pa., and Kenneth King, New Holland, Pa., June 4 at James Street Mennonite Church, Lancaster.

Kennell/Miller: Keith Kennell, Lowpoint, Ill., and Kelly Miller, Washington, Ill., June 11 at Grace Bible Church, Washington.

Kratzer/Wenger: Hannah Kratzer, Kidron, Ohio, and Darrell Wenger, Chesapeake, Va., June 18 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Kooker/Wittmer: Zachary Kooker, Hesston, Kan., and Mary Wittmer, Hartville, Ohio, June 25 at Hartville Mennonite Church.

Lauck/Powell: Christy Lauck, Findlay, Ohio, and Kurt Powell, Findlay, May 29.

Martin/Reinford: Hanna Martin, Peachtree City, Ga., and Joshua Reinford, Wooster, Ohio, June 18 at Chambersburg (Pa.) Brethren in Christ.

Meyer/Reid: Tim Meyer, Wayland, Iowa, and Michelle Reid, Wayland, June 25 at Swedesburg (Iowa) Lutheran Church.

Miller/Rohrer: Ellen Miller, Millersburg, Ohio, and Steve Rohrer, Wadsworth, Ohio, July 9 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Miller/Sines: Carrie Miller, Springs, Pa., and Riley Sines, Springs, June 11 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Miller/Yoder: Zackary Miller, Millersburg, Ohio, and Rachel Yoder, Baltic, Ohio, June 4 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Moser/Zehr: Lyle Jacob (Jake) Moser, Croghan, N.Y., and Cassandra Zehr, Lowville, N.Y., June 4, at Croghan Mennonite Church.

Moyer/Moyer: Jonathan A. Moyer, Sellersville, Pa., and Stephanie Moyer, Telford, Pa., July 2 at Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville, Pa.

Overholt/Zehr: Dorcas Overholt, Blounstown, Fla., and Matthew Zehr, Sarasota, Fla., May 28 on the beach in Sarasota.

Perez/Unrau: Martin Perez and Paula Unrau, June 11.

DEATHS

Baum, Wayne H. Jr., 85, Akron, Pa., died June 21. Spouse: Dorothy K. Shuman Baum (deceased). Parents: Wayne S. and Martha Hess Baum. Children: Dorothy S. Eshleman, Kathryn S. Groff, Wayne S. Baum III; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 25 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Beck, Harold G., 74, Hesston, Kan., died June 5. Spouse: Ruth Krehbiel Zerger Beck. Parents: Lester and Mary Grove Beck. Children: Len, Kennis; step-children; Scott Zerger, Mick Zerger, Dan Zerger, Sue Hagen; one grandchild; eight step-grandchildren; three step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Bosley, Robert H., 69, Lititz, Pa., died May 20. Parents: John A. and Anna V. Parker Bosley. Funeral: May 25 at Landis Homes West Bethany Chapel, Lititz.

Boslow, Helen King, 93, Grantsville, Md., died June 23. Spouse: Harold Boslow (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mary Holliday King. Funeral: June 26 in Grantsville.

Brainard, Margaret Easton, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., died May 23 in an auto accident. Spouse: Addison Brainard. Parents: Dean and Esther Easton. Children: Esther Ann Schnur, Kate Brainard-Lee; three grandchildren. Funeral: June 18 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Buller, Lenora Koehn, 92, North Newton, Kan., died July 2. Spouse: (1st) David Androes (deceased), (2nd) John Buller (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Lea Johnson Koehn. Children: Norman Koehn, Romielda Wilmore, Loretta Nightingale, Karen True, Barbara Wedel; 20 grandchildren; 37 great-grandchildren; nine great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Burkey, Harry, 95, Arcadia, Fla., died June 27. Spouse: Clarice A. Mann Burkey (deceased). Parents: William H. and Mary Hunsberger Burkey. Children: Lucile Grandstaff, Retha Owen, Irene Hargrove, Karen Mishler, Wilma Kessens, Lester, Earl, Dale, Philip, Ralph (deceased), Harold (deceased); 46 grandchildren, 94 great-grandchildren; 22 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 6 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Burkhalter, Grace, 84, Walnut Creek, Ohio, died June 20. Spouse: Lester Burkhalter (deceased). Parents: David and Bertha Huff. Children: Terry, Sheldon, Renee Krabbe; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Brandeberry, John R., 92, Middlebury, Ind., died May 23. Spouse: Leona Yoder Brandeberry (deceased). Parents: Jess C. and Della Mishler Brandeberry. Children: Julia Weaver, J. Robert, Jacqueline Wilson; two grandchildren; two step-grandchildren. Funeral: May 29 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Eck, Viola Goertz, 86, Newton, Kan., died June 9. Spouse: Detrick Eck. Parents: Jacob and Marie Schroeder Goertz. Children: Barbara Cooper, Gary; two grandchildren. Funeral: June 9 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Epp, Amelia Becker, 77, Henderson, Neb., died June 7 of cancer. Spouse: Robert O. Epp. Parents: Daniel and Anna T. Becker. Children: Lora Jost, Heidi Schmidt; six grandchildren. Funeral: June 10 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Eshelman, Stanley, 66, Sellersville, Pa., died June 21. Spouse: Eileen Johnson Eshelman. Parents: Henry and Florence Garis Eshelman. Children: Grace Keller, Stephanie McConaghy; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 28 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Flaming, Hilda Brandt, 87, Reedley, Calif., died May 31. Spouse: H. Waldo Flaming. Children: Gracie Rogalsky, Jerry, Barbara, Stan; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 6 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Geiser, Idella Mae Lehman, 84, Kidron, Ohio, died May 20. Parents: Silas Lehman and Bertha Nussbaum. Children: Dee Neuenschwander, Sharon Steffen, Gordon, Harry, Harlan; 15 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 23 at Sonnenberg Mennonite Church, Kidron.

Geist, Edward, 87, Moundridge, Kan., died June 9. Spouse: Ruth Geist. Parents: Thomas and Pearl Geist. Funeral: June 20 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead, Kan.

Gerber, Selma, Dalton, Ohio, died June 22. Spouse: Willis Gerber (deceased). Parents: Dan and Dinah Sommer. Children: Harold, Donald, Joanne, Robert. Funeral: June 27 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Goering, Dorothy Mae Krehbiel, 75, McPherson, Kan., died June 29 of leukemia. Spouse: Kenneth W. Goering. Parents: Herb J. and Esther V. Goering Krehbiel. Children: Alan, Barton, Timothy; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 2 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Good, Nelson W., 61, Washington, D.C., died July 13. Spouse: Betty Wenger Good. Parents: Ira and Ruth Good. Children: Ryan, Deborah, Jason. Funeral: July 18 at Capital Christian Fellowship, Lanham, Md.

Hensley, Martha Ellen, 57, Mt. Crawford, Va., died June 26. Spouse: Donald Ray Hensley. Parents: Ralph Benjamin and Irene Mae Conrad Shaffer. Children: Gary Lee, Jason Ray. Burial: June 29 at Pike Mennonite Cemetery, Harrisonburg, Va.

Hershberger, Edwin S., 77, Goshen, Ind., died June 13. Spouse: E. Arlene Hoover Hershberger. Parents: Josiah and Rosa Swartzentruber Hershberger. Children: June Tricka, Sharon Zepeda, Rita Bontrager, Jay, David, Daryl; 24 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 16 at Benton (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Hiebert, Erma, 87, Newton, Kan., died March 27. Spouse: Frank Hiebert (deceased). Parents: Dietrich and Katharina Kornelsen Hiebert. Child: Galen (deceased); five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 31 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Hilty, Ann, 67, Bluffton, Ohio, died June 9. Parents: Herman and Celia Sprunger Hilty. Funeral: June 18 at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton.

Himes, Mabel, 79, Kidron, Ohio, died May 23. Spouse: Harley Himes. Parents: William and Clara Geiser. Funeral: May 26 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Hockman, Gertrude Frederick, 86, Perkasie, Pa., died June 20. Spouse: Harold S. Hockman. Parents: Abraham and Stella Lapp Frederick. Children: Timothy, Stella Cummings; six grandchildren. Funeral: June 24 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hofstetter, Willis, 93, Dalton, Ohio, died May 17. Spouse: Della Hofstetter. Parents: David and Lavina Hofstetter. Children: Marlene, Howard, Starla Woodruff; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 20 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Hood, Maryann Cavender, 74, died July 19 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Curtis Leroy Hood. Parents: Joseph Jefferson and Lesta Rollins Cavender. Children: Rebecca Jane Hood Rungsang, Alisa Carolyn Rungsang, Jennifer Lynn, Melanie Elaine, Daniel Matthew, Anna Kristen Nichols, Luke Cavender Nichols, Thomas James, John Leslie. Funeral: July 21 at Pinetucky Baptist Church, Cleburne, Ala.

Hostetler, Mabel, 98, Goshen, Ind., died June 27. Spouse: William Hostetler (deceased). Parents: Edward and Edna Yoder Hostetler. Children: Roberta Fisher, Ruth Clouse, Richard; 15 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 1 at Yoder-Culp Funeral Home, Goshen.

Juhnke, Anna Kreider, 65, North Newton, Kan., died June 17. Spouse: James C. Juhnke. Parents: Leonard and Rachel Weaver Kreider. Children: Karl, Joanne; two grandchildren. Funeral: July 2 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Kline, Helen Dovel, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died July 9. Spouse: Virgil "Jake" Kline (deceased). Parents: Fredrick and Hillara Louderback Dovel. Child: Peggy K. Whetzel; three grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Burial: July 12 at Woodbine Cemetery, Harrisonburg.

Leatherman, Earl D., 72, Perkasie, Pa., died June 20. Spouse: Marilyn Bechtel Leatherman. Parents: John and Mary Derstine Leatherman. Children: Patty Osterdahl, Marcia Wilson, Scott; seven grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie.

Lehman, Dennis, 85, Kidron, Ohio, died May 31. Spouse: Grace Lehman. Parents: Noah and Mary Lehman. Child: Delbert; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Lehn, Cornelia, 84, Chilliwack, B.C., died July 2. Funeral: July 6 at Greendale (B.C.) First Mennonite Church

Linder, Leonard, 82, Louisville, Ohio, died June 18. Spouse: Elsie Linder. Parents: Eli and Lizzie Schmucker Linder. Children: Barbara Engelhand, Brenda Smith; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 21 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Litwiller, Esther Mae, 16, Lewistown, Pa., died May 28 in an automobile accident. Parents: Kenneth E. and Laura Litwiller. Sibling: Marta. Funeral: June 2 at Calvary Bible Church, Lewistown.

Martin, Elizabeth Brubacher, 100, St. Jacobs, Ont., died June 26. Spouse: Enoch Martin (deceased). Parents: Menno and Almeta Good Brubacher. Children: Ruth Bauman, Lorraine Bauman; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: June 29 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Miller, Mary C. Wenger, 90, Middlebury, Ind., died July 8. Spouse: William C. Miller (deceased). Parents: David and Eva Loucks Wenger. Children: Melba Ferrec, Jerry; six grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 14 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Miller, Nelson E., 82, Middlebury, Ind., died July 7. Spouse: Mable Detweiler Miller. Parents: Elmer and Barbara Yoder Miller. Children: Gary, Rhonda Brubaker; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 11 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury.

Miller, Ray Lee, 69, Orrville, Ohio, died June 7. Spouse: Arlene M. Lehman Miller. Parents: Eli L. and Lucy Hochstetler Miller. Children: Bonnie, Louella Becker, Russell, Amy Bugaj, Allan "Dale", Nancy Speicher; 15 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 11 at Wooster (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Mueller, Edna Ruth, 86, Halstead, Kan., died May 36. Parents: Rudolf and Selma Mueller. Funeral: May 31 at First Mennonite Church, Halstead.

Nace, Willard, 89, Colmar, Pa., died June 24. Spouse: Lena Marinucci Nace (deceased). Parents: William and Lizzie Kulp Nace. Children: Shirley Williams, Charles K. Funeral: June 27 at Scanlin Funeral Home, Chalfont, Pa.

Pankratz, Gustav, 94, Newton, Kan., died May 30. Spouse: Anna Auernheimer Pankratz (deceased). Parents: George and Anna Frey Pankratz. Children: Dulane, Donna Becker; seven grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 3 at First Mennonite Church, Newton.

Peachey, Erin N., 17, Reedsville, Pa., died May 28 in an automobile accident. Parents: Emerson and Sandra Peachey. Sibling: Brittany. Funeral: June 1 at Allensville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Peifer, Willis E., 93, Lititz, Pa., died July 3. Spouse: Grace L. Peifer. Parents: Clayton and Alice Erb Peifer. Children: Blanch R. Myer, Verna (deceased), Nancy J. Forrey; step-children: Lee Landis, Kenneth Landis; five grandchildren; four step-grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; seven step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Plett, Robert A., 63, Inola, Okla., died June 10 of a heart attack. Spouse: Claudia Johnson Plett. Parents: Mike and Mae Loewen Plett. Children: Alan, J. Patrick, Chester Payne, Michael Payne; four grandchildren. Funeral: June 14 at United Methodist Church, Inola.

Regier, Susie A. Wiens, 84, Inman, Kan., died June 12. Children: Darlene Ann Regier Stucky, Gilbert Wade; seven grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; four great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 17 at Inman Mennonite Church.

Ropp, Anna R. Kropf, 100, Garden City, Mo., died June 9. Spouse: Peter A. Ropp (deceased). Parents: David D. and Catherine Mayer Kropf. Children: Allen E., Ronald D., Paul S.; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 14 at Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.).

Roupp, Rosalena Ruth, 80, Goshen, Ind., died June 15. Spouse: S. Milford Roupp. Parents: Abraham and Anna Isaacs Willems. Children: Valerie Helser, Sherry Jordan, Janelle Diller, Patrice Dunbar; seven grandchildren. Funeral: June 22 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

Schmidt, Ted, 90, Reedley, Calif., died June 2. Spouse: Bertha Friesen Schmidt (deceased). Parents: John W. and Mary Pankratz Schmidt. Children: Myrna Villanueva, Ron, Carolynn Thomas, Cheryl Nicholson; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 7 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley.

Schmitt, Etta Bartel, 76, Hesston, Kan., died June 7. Spouse: Peter Schmitt (deceased). Parents: Edwin and Sarah Friesen Bartel. Children: Ken, Jan Oprin; five grandchildren. Funeral: June 19 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Schrock, Mary Crossgrove, 91, Archbold, Ohio, died July 20. Spouse: Waldo Schrock (deceased). Parents: Charles and Mary Wyse Crossgrove. Children: Weston, Thurman, Mary Ida Kinkle; 10 grandchildren; 26 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Schwarzentraub, Caroline, 93, Morton, Ill., June 23. Parents: Joseph V. and Johannah Kennel Schwarzentraub. Funeral: June 27 in Morton.

Smucker, Francis W., 88, Orrville, Ohio, died June 22. Spouse: May Rohrer Smucker. Parents: Simon and Lydia Wenger Smucker. Children: Patti MacGregor, Jane Beyeler, Eber, Vera Shenk; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: June 25 at Smithville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Suderman, Anna, 100, North Newton, Kan., died July 10. Parents: Jacob and Anna Regier Suderman. Funeral: July 13 at Kidron Bethel Menno Hall, North Newton.

Suter, Eldon LeRoy, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 21. Spouse: Kathryn Landes Suter. Parents: Jacob C. and Mary Shank Suter. Children: Donna Clayton, Diana Berkshire, Joy Halterman, Eldon "Eldie", Jewel Knicely; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Burial: June 23 at Weavers Mennonite Cemetery, Harrisonburg.

Troyer, Amy Lorraine Hertzler, 77, Harrisonburg, Va., died June 12. Spouse: John Mast Troyer. Parents: Asa and Rebecca Shenk Hertzler. Children: Rose Marie, John Terry, Herbert N., John Mark; six grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 15 in Harrisonburg, Va.

Weaver, Dr. Galen F., 48, died June 11. Spouse: Deborah M. Jones. Parents: Dr. Floyd E. and Edna Mae Stalter Weaver. Children: Daniel, Bradley, Christopher, Evan, Rachel. Memorial service: Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.).

Weaver, Leon P., 74, Ephrata, Pa., died June 22. Spouse: Lorraine Martin Weaver. Parents: Elmer and Minnie Sauder Weaver. Children: Marlin R., Joyce E. Fox, Janice E. Brotzman, Carolyn F. Frederick, Sharon L. Weaver; 10 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 27 at Lititz (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Witmer, Edna Gerig, 81, Leo, Ind., died July 1. Spouse: Henry (Hank) Witmer. Parents: David and Mattie Gerig. Children: Clifford, Cletus, Clarence; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 4 at North Leo (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Sadie Miller, 92, Goshen, Ind., died May 21. Spouse: C. Harold Yoder (deceased). Parents: Edwin D. and Lydia Egli Miller. Children: Carolyn Leichty, Marilyn Zellinger, Donald, S. Glenn; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: May 26 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, Sylvia S., 93, Bradenton, Fla., died June 22 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Clark Yoder (deceased). Parents: Joel and Helen Sommer. Children: Donna Brunk, Kathryn Weyh, Joyce Anders; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 26 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla.

Zehr, John Russell, 71, Foosland, Ill., died June 6. Parents: Silas and Mabel Zehr. Funeral: June 9 at East Bend Mennonite Church, Fisher, Ill.

Zook, Daniel P., 80, Allensville, Pa., died July 6. Parents: Stephen W. and Mary E. Peachey Zook. Children: Mary Bates, Thomas, Virginia Bohn, Helen Benner, Dorothy; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 10 at Valley View Amish Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa.

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Mennonite Mission Network seeks a ***director of information technology*** to provide the vision, hands-on leadership, planning and management for the development, acquisition, implementation and support of information technology in a multiorganization, multiculture environment. The director will partner with other Mennonite Church USA organizations to align with strategic direction and build and develop the IT functions and procedures to support organizational objectives. The director plans, directs and manages to ensure the development and implementation of cost-effective systems and efficient computer operations to meet current and future decision-making requirements. This person must be a collaborative leader who balances strategic thinking and teamwork with technical expertise. Strong communication skills, ability and willingness to travel are important. Required qualifications also include experience in a similar leadership position and a bachelor's degree in IT or an equivalent field. For more information, see Staff Opportunities at www.MennoniteMission.net.

***Head women's basketball coach*—Eastern Mennonite University** seeks applications for the position of head women's basketball coach. This is a full-time coaching staff appointment (.75 FTE) for 2005-06 with high potential for an ongoing appointment and ad-ditional university assignment. Coaching responsibilities include year-round recruiting, operating and managing all aspects of a quality basketball program in the highly competitive Old Dominion Athletic Conference at the NCAA Division III level. Bachelor's degree required, master's or higher degree preferred in physical education or related field. Experience coaching at the college level preferred, or successful head coaching experience of at least three years at the high school level or equivalent required. Send letter of application, resumé, three references and responses to the four questions in the following 'GOTO Application Materials' link, www.mu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/coachwomenbball2.htm. Send information to Dave King, Athletic Director, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802, david.king@emu.edu, 540-432-4646. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

The Newton, Kan., Et Cetera Shop is seeking a ***full-time general manager*** to supervise 200 volunteers and up to 10 staff. Must be computer-savvy, a self-starter, have solid math and strong communication skills, ability to prioritize. Must be able to lift, bend and be on your feet much of the day. Must work independently or in a group. Occasional evenings or weekends. Excellent public relations skills and a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience required. Knowledge of Spanish a plus. For information, contact Deb Goering at 316-284-2982. Applications closed on Aug. 26 or until position is filled.

Half-time pastor needed at **Light of Life Mennonite Church**, Farmington, N.M., in a cross-cultural congregation of two-thirds Native American and one-third Caucasian. Small congregation located near mountains and desert canyons. Contact conference ministers, Ed and Katherine Rempel, 303-347-9266, or committee chair, Arnold Miller, 505-564-3266.

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Retail sales: **Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society**, a nonprofit, educational corporation, has an immediate opening for a retail sales manager: new books, used books and museum shop crafts and gifts. Understanding of Anabaptist perspectives necessary. Previous retail experience and computer skills required. Send resumé to LMHS-Personnel, 2215 Millstream Road, Lancaster, PA 17602-1499.

Goshen College seeks a ***full-time graphic designer***. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment.

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Holy Rood Mennonite Church, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is seeking a ***full-time senior pastor and possibly a half-time associate pastor***. Consideration will also be given to hiring a pastor couple where the spouse would serve as the associate pastor. Tentative starting date is Jan. 1, 2006. We are members of Mennonite Church Alberta and Mennonite Church Canada. Average attendance is 80-100 in a congregation diverse in cultures, ages and walks in life. See www.holyroodmennonite.ca for further information about the congregation. Interested applicants please contact our Alberta Conference minister, Jim Shantz, at 780-485-2518 and Guenther Toews, Chair of Pastoral Search Committee at 780-458-9358.

Part-time conference minister for **NY Mennonite Conference** beginning October 2006. Conference profile available: http://nymennon.bfn.org/. MLI required. Contact Philip Martin amcpastor@highstream.net, 716-937-0412. Applications accepted through October 2005.

Mennonite Central Committee is recruiting for the position of ***MCC liaison to the United Nations in New York***. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position. The liaison's assignment is to foster a Christian pacifist vision in the conduct of international affairs at the UN, interpret MCC to the UN and advocate relevant policies on behalf of MCC.

Significant experience outside North America and Europe or other highly industrialized areas of the world is important. Training in international relations, law or theology is preferred. Self-motivation and skill in cross-cultural communication are required. Relating to UN diplomats, hosting MCC workers, overseeing the work of office interns and maintaining regular contact with MCC offices defines the routine work of the MCC UN Liaison Office in New York. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically under-represented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply.

Contact Prem Dick for a copy of the job description and send a letter of intent and a resumé by email to psd@mcc.org or by fax at 717-859-2171 by Sept. 1, 2005. The position is scheduled to begin Dec. 1, 2005.

Mennonite Central Committee is seeking applicants for the following service worker assignments. Contact your nearest MCC office or Goldie Kuhns at 717- 859-1151 or gpk@mcc.org, for an application. Job descriptions are on MCC's Web site: www.mcc.org/serve.

Muslim/Christian exchange participants in a three-year assignment for a couple in Iran. Interest in studying Islam is essential; degree in religious studies, including Anabaptist theology and history, is preferred.

Accountant for a three-year assignment in Indonesia to provide service for MCC's country program and tsunami response. Training in accounting and three years of experience is required.

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Killing or letting die?

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu. Also go to www.anabaptistethics.org.

To say that 65-year-old Thelma was in bad shape is an understatement. Her breathing depended on a ventilator, and she had a large, growing, inoperable tumor in her face and sinus cavity. Thelma also had a bleak medical history that included a blood clot in her lung (a "pulmonary embolism"), heart disease, asthma, lupus and diabetes. Aware of her situation, Thelma requested the ventilator be removed.

Many of us would make the same request, but Thelma and her loving family were devout Catholics, and her family strongly resisted the idea. They knew that Thelma could not survive without the respirator, and they worried that removing it amounted to suicide (Thelma killing herself) or euthanasia (the family and doctors killing her). Thelma's family feared that such a death would leave her rejected by God and by her church.

Father William O'Brien helped Thelma and her family resolve this situation by helping them move toward a more accurate understanding of their shared Catholic faith. By clarifying the distinction between "killing" and "letting die," O'Brien helped them see that from a Catholic perspective Thelma was neither committing suicide nor asking for euthanasia. Thelma was instead asking to be allowed to die. Once relieved of their fears about killing, the family's energy was easily directed toward caring for and assuring each other. (This story is taken loosely from: William J. O'Brien III., "Dialogue Between Faith and Science: The Role of the Hospital Chaplain," *The Journal of Clinical Ethics* 6, no. 3 [Fall 1995].)

From a Christian perspective, our position as finite creatures created to love and serve God places real limits on our control of our lives and our authority over the lives of others.

While the line between killing and letting die is often difficult to discern, the distinction is vital to Christians. Christians, especially Anabaptists, have traditionally opposed directly aiming at death to end an unattractive or undesirable life. This opposition is grounded in many Christian convictions, including the example of Jesus himself, the belief that our lives do not belong to us but to God, the realization that faithfulness sometimes entails suffering. From a Christian perspective, our position as finite creatures created to love and serve God places real limits on our control of our lives and our authority over the lives of others. To kill, to aim at death—whether our own through suicide or someone else's through euthanasia—is to usurp God's place by acting as if our lives belonged to us.

This realization that our lives belong to Another is also why letting die is often appropriate. When we use medical technology to fight death at every turn we are again acting as if our lives belong to us; acting as if we, rather than God, should determine the length of our days. By contrast, letting die is often a sign of trust in God, a symbol of submission to God's providential care and a testimony to belief in the resurrection.

Medical technology can be a wonderful gift, serving as the means by which God brings physical comfort and healing. Unfortunately, our use of such technology—including ventilators, dialysis, feeding tubes and bypass surgeries—too often reflects our true (though unstated) conviction that our technology, not God, is our real Savior. Strangely parallel to killing, refusing to let die usurps God's place by acting as if our lives belonged to us.

The difference between killing and letting die is often difficult to discern in practice because the same outward, physical action can be either killing or letting die. For example, a physician giving morphine may mean to be making the patient more comfortable or it may mean to be accelerating the patient's death. The former is compatible with letting die but the latter is an act of killing.

While the outward, physical action may be the same, what matters is the difference between our intention (what we aim at) and what we foresee (what we recognize may happen). Recognizing (foreseeing) that someone may die because we are giving morphine or removing a respirator or feeding tube is not the same thing as aiming at their death. Thelma's family can recognize the likely consequences of removing the respirator without intending (aiming at, having their hearts set on) her death. They may instead be intending to honor Thelma's wishes or to accept human limitations and finitude.

These distinctions between killing and letting die, between intention and foreseeing, can seem like splitting hairs and can be difficult to determine in practice. Still, such distinctions help us think about whether we believe our lives belong to us or to God. And to Christians the question of to whom we belong matters a great deal.

Our annual report profiles some of the stories and a few of the statistics that describe MCC's ministry of demonstrating God's love in action, moving with compassion.

Moving with Compassion
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Mennonite Central Committee

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Everett J. Thomas

Join the party

"Mennonites in the United States should commit themselves to a five-year sabbatical from affiliation with any political party," Goshen (Ind.) College professor John D. Roth said to Mennonite Church USA delegates at Charlotte 2005. Roth's proposal was part of his address (page 10) that kicked off a delegate assembly discussion about "speaking to government."

Jim Wallis, author of *God's Politics*, proposes something different: Evangelical Christians with a social conscience should abandon current political parties and start a new one. Wallis calls it a "fourth option" to conservative, liberal and libertarian partisanship (*Sojourners*, February 2005).

Here's another proposal: Mennonites should get even more involved in the political parties of their choice and change them. To do so, we would advocate a whole-life ethic that views all of human life as sacred. That would translate into candidates and platforms that are opposed to abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia and war. We would use our skills at community-building and conflict transformation as antidotes to the polarization each party exploits for self-interest. Such involvement would also demonstrate that the kingdom of God transcends issues about which we "agree to disagree."

One way I have begun such involvement is to have a conversation with another Mennonite who is committed to a different political party. That happened recently by coincidence.

Mennonites should get even more involved in the political parties of their choice and change them.

Our congregation, College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., has three members who also hold elected office: two Democrat city councilmen and one Republican state senator. As one of the councilmen, I was invited by a Sunday school class to put together a month-long series called "Mennonites and Political Power."

Marvin Riegsecker, longtime state senator for the Indiana Republican party, joined the panel discussions one morning. We explained how we attempt to integrate our faith into the responsibilities of elected office. Marvin revealed the hardships he faces in the Republican party during times of war. He also said that whenever he votes against capital punishment, the "back-benchers" accuse him of being soft on crime.

Although we are members of the same congregation, Marvin and I had never talked about the sanctity of life values we share—whether it be in opposition to war or opposition to capital punishment. Given his long tenure and the leadership responsibilities accruing to him, Marvin's stand on these issues influences his Republican colleagues.

Marvin and I worship together, hear the same sermons and sing out of the same hymnal. We want to be faithful to the same teachings of Mennonite Church USA. But we experience two different worlds when we enter the machinations of our respective political parties. Instead of withdrawing from opportunities to influence these powerful institutions, we and other Mennonites called to such involvement can bring our values and convictions to those arenas, just like we are expected to do in other vocations.

Until recently, I kept the Democratic party at arm's length. I resisted involvement for two reasons: the party's hardline prochoice stance and its complicity in polarizing every possible issue in Indiana and national public policy discussions.

Recently, however, I have found a way to work for change within the organization. A group of us formed a state chapter of the national pro-life group Democrats for Life of America. By working within the party's structure, we hope to influence platforms and candidates to help reduce abortions by 95 percent in the next 10 years—the goal of legislation being introduced by several DFLA members in the U.S. Congress.

Although God is not a Republican … or a Democrat (as Wallis said often last year), the major political parties are entrenched as our national institutions, and they need transformation. For some of us, being faithful may mean distancing ourselves from political party involvement with a sabbatical. But God can also use those called to work within those powerful organizations. Such participation is another way for God's healing and hope to flow through us to the world.—*ejt*

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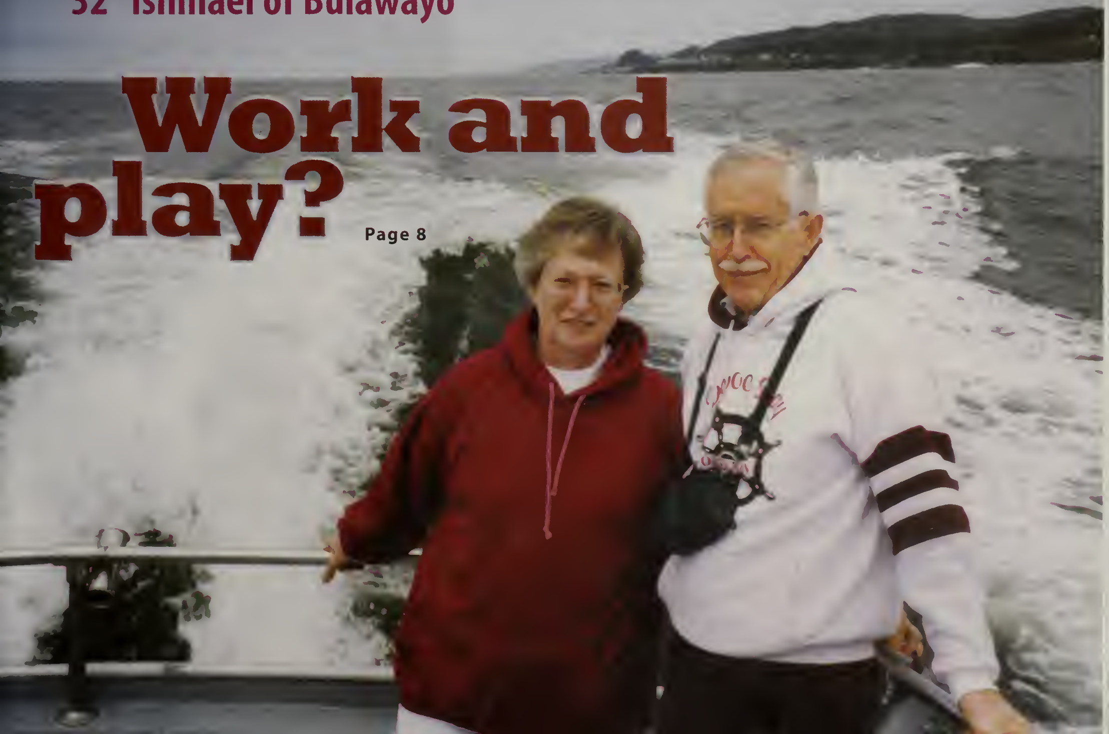

The parable of culture

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

Disciples who want to share God's good news and make disciples must understand the human predicament and share parables with our friends, like sowing seeds in the hope the seeds will bear fruit.

At a banquet in June, parents and their children filled a hall to celebrate their children's completion of middle school. At our table, someone asked me why Kellie and I had moved to Baltimore, and I explained, To be part of a church working at church planting. The topic shifted to Christianity, and one woman said she attends worship regularly but does not believe the Gospels' accounts of Jesus.

All of us were part of different congregations in the city. One woman listed her disappointments with the Religious Right and the Bush administration's actions and how they both use Christianity for evil purposes.

I saw no good way to ask a question, so instead I made a statement that went something like, "How a Christian lives is a result of whether they pick up their cross and follow Jesus or use the religion for their own purposes." It does not matter if you're conservative or liberal in such a scenario; Jesus is either Lord or a tool for your personal use and application.

That was my quasi-parable. I had no further opportunity to add similar tidbits into the conversation. She said she has been ambivalent about her relationship to the church.

Kellie said, "You'd find a lot of people in our congregation who agree with your sentiment; many of us are pacifists."

That statement connected with her, and she smiled. This woman's journey had come to the place where, as she explained it, the social issues that consumed her and her husband's time were not on the agenda of the church.

Here was a woman who some time ago had checked out of her faith in Christ and devoted her attention to some as-yet unnamed purpose. She wanted to talk about religion and I wanted to talk about being in Christ.

In our churches are people who do not believe in Jesus but believe in his principles and are attracted to some of his teachings. They see in some of these teachings words that resonate with other faith traditions and would like to construct a Christianity freed from the "errors" in the Gospels and thus harmonious with these other views of God and mankind.

Here then is the meaning of the story. Even when the conversation is about religion and politics but supposedly not about Jesus, the conversation is about religion and politics and Jesus. The reason many in the church find themselves frustrated with their religious experience is that we have not obeyed Jesus and so have not experienced what God promised those who obey Jesus. Instead we are engaging the religious experience in order to have our expectations satisfied and fulfilled. Are our churches wells without water, trees with no fruit, "doubly dead because we've no root"?

When you are privileged to talk with your neighbor in the pew who is skeptical about the Bible's record of Jesus or does not believe in Jesus, ask the Lord of the harvest to help you share a parable; one will do. Too many parables may obscure what the Spirit of the Lord wants you to say.

When we gather in our modern temples as a public, we are a mixed crowd of believers, skeptics and unbelievers. Like Israel led into the wilderness, among us are those whose hearing can only bear the truth told through parables. For some, God's good news can only be portioned out in small doses through stories. For others, experience with God is limited by unbelief in Jesus. Parables must be used, then, in the hope that the attention of the unbelieving will be attracted to Jesus, something greater than the temple. TM

TheMennonite

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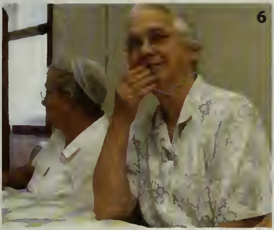

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Universal care for Mennonites?

I was a delegate at Charlotte 2005. It occurred to me, in the wake of the assembly, that one of the main reasons MMA is having an increasingly tough time providing reasonably priced health coverage to church members is that many Mennonites, including the healthiest and most financially secure, opt out of MMA for less expensive employer-subsidized health-care plans.

If every Mennonite church member paid premiums to MMA (perhaps with voluntary surplus contributions from wealthier congregations to help cover poorer Mennonites and church workers) every church member could also be extended reasonable health coverage through MMA for less than the premiums charged by HMOs and commercial carriers.

Is this true? Or is this wishful thinking? In short, is universal health care for Mennonites possible, even in principle? How missional would that be, if we could make it so? —*Dirk Eitzen, Lancaster, Pa.*

Where is environmental concern?

Re the July 26 issue of *The Mennonite*: The magazine has wonderful material; the articles about the biennial assembly are great. But I saw no mention of us Christians helping protect the environment, helping care for creation and helping make peace with nature. Surely Mennonite Church USA still has an Environmental Task Force. It seems that someone from the task force should have represented us environmentalists at the assembly.

If we Christians desire a better future for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren, we must help make this the Environment Century. If this is not the Environment Century, by 2050 every living person and thing will possibly be dead because of the lack of air, water and food. We Christians in general are a little bit too worldly. So right now, each of us needs to start living somewhat simpler.—*Dwight E. Wratchford, Martinsburg, W.Va.*

Speaking to government

Thanks to *The Mennonite* for publishing the thoughtful pleas by J. Daryl Byler and John D. Roth (Aug. 9). It was good to see in print what was presented at Charlotte 2005. In response to their pleas, I offer one of my own: Rather than choosing one path or the other—and engaging in potentially divisive debate in the process—I would call us to do both. I envision an intentional partnership between individuals, with one engaging our government prophetically and the other committing to spiritual disciplines of silence and prayer. Small groups, Sunday school classes, congregations and even conferences could covenant, with one agreeing to follow the path recommended by Byler and the other the path recommended by Roth.

Such intentional partnering would permit us to bear witness to the truth within us through both our speech and our silence. It would work against the potential for splitting along party lines and work against the temptation to neglect our prophetic responsibility.

As North American Mennonites prayerfully consider the pleas of Byler and Roth, let me be bold enough to suggest that this plea, too, be part of our discernment.—*Ron Adams, Lancaster, Pa.*

Moratorium should end

My family is in turmoil. My spouse and I have two children who are living a homosexual lifestyle. Their choices have affected most everything in our lives, resulting in a constant heaviness bearing upon us as parents. We share our thoughts and feelings with each other and few others. We call on Mennonite Church USA and *The Mennonite* to lift the moratorium on discussions, informational articles and letters to Readers Say on this topic. The five-year moratorium has left us with a void for leadership and direction in our lives.

The assembly at Charlotte 2005 had a glaring absence of any seminars or discussion on the floor of this matter. This is not limited to only the practicing homosexual, but I believe it affects many families. Where is the leadership from our church on an issue that impacts so many of our families? Now is the time for our church to become the "We" that was promoted at Charlotte. Many of us are hurting deeply and desire Anabaptist perspective in thought, word and deed on this timely and sensitive topic.—*Name withheld by request*

IN THIS ISSUE

It is not uncommon for us to sense God's Spirit moving in the selection process whereby we choose the articles and poems for each issue of *The Mennonite*. This issue is an example. Lynn Miller's challenging word about how we understand "retirement" (page 8) addresses the "doing" part of growing older. Martha Kolb-Wyckoff's suggestions about bearing fruit in old age (page 11) addresses "being": While mental and physical strength may fade during the aging process, she notes that "one part of us has the potential to grow better, stronger and more robust as we age: our spirit." Anne Siegrist (page 12) describes such a spirit in her uncle Melvin, whose single act of grace gave her a glimpse of the nature and grace of God. Ray Barrier (page 13) notices many such acts of grace and suggests they are the work of "designated angels." But it was the poem and photo on page 15 that moved us most as we prepared this issue. We invite readers to wade into the stream with the little girl and then remain to "frolic, wade and wonder."—*Editors*

Burying head in sand

The May 17 editorial ("*The Mennonite* Voice") listed the proposed goals for *The Mennonite*, indicating that at times minority opinions needed to be heard. Yet on the Readers Say page, you continue a moratorium on letters concerning sexual orientation and practice. This represents a biased and opinionated position that leads to further ignorance, prejudice and heartbreak. In the June 21 issue, Kenyetta Twine's Leadership column addressed racial and cultural issues ("Relating Across Races and Culture"). She made many good points that should be just as relevant for our G.L.B.T. (gay-lesbian-bisexual-transexual) community. It appears that *The Mennonite* is doing a good job of burying its head in the sand and that you are speaking out of both corners of your mouth. When presenting only the comfortable positions, you are not giving voice to the minority. Only through education and understanding can we resolve these issues.—*James L. Thomas, Kaneohe, Hawaii*

Dialogue in spite of disagreements?

We express our support of Seattle Mennonite Church and its pastor, Weldon Nisly, for welcoming and affirming gays and lesbians as an integral part of church life and, consequently, a part of Mennonite Church USA. We understand that Nisly's decision to marry a lesbian couple is (and will be) a decision that some members of the Mennonite church will find troubling, based on their reading of the Bible. We understand that people who hold this belief are sincere in their desire to be faithful, and we want to hear their concerns.

We also believe that we need the voices of all people (regardless of their position on homosexuality), as long as each person is, in turn, willing to continue dialogue with everyone else. We must not cut off those who disagree. Can we, as a Mennonite church, learn to live in community, hearing each other in the midst of disagreements, without resorting to shunning, removing credentials, splitting, excommunicating? Can we commit ourselves to remaining in dialogue despite disagreements?—*Douglas Kliewer, David Krehbiel, Hope Nisly, Don Friesen, Ele Friesen, Carol Krehbiel, Jim Compton-Schmidt, Annie Compton-Schmidt, Fred Smeds, Robert Huddleston, Richard R. Peterson, Karen H. Peterson, Dorothy Boldt, Victoria A. Smith, Darwayne Smith, Allen Linscheid, Georgia Linscheid, Katharine Dettweiler, Martha Zimmerman, Marden C. Habegger, Marianna Habegger, Lorene Blanchard, Louise Auernheimer, Ethel Harder, Ed Jenkins, Catherine Ratmeyer, Pearl Janzen, Ruth Buxman, Joel Hoffman, Janet Harder Parker, Paul A. Buxman, Elsie Lichti, Herbert Lichti, Melinda T. Hasegawa, Glena Penner, Joleen Siebert, Corinna Ruth, Jerry Linscheid, Ralph Bowman, Judy Warkentin, Vern Warkentin, Ted Loewen, Christine Lichti, Trent Scarberry, Fran Loewen, from or near Reedley, Calif.*

Ethics at the dinner table

In preparation for the Aug. 14 Sunday school lesson on Jesus' miraculous healing of the woman with a hemorrhage and the raising of Jarius' daughter, I was finding it difficult to portray a contemporary example of Jesus' healing in today's world. Then I found Ron Adams' article "Let's Do Ethics at the Dinner Table" (Grace and Truth, Aug. 9) an excellent example of Christ's healing today. We (Christ's body) can be instruments of healing in our nonjudgmental, compassionate encounters with ordinary people who have desperate needs by listening to their stories and giving them our attention. We can be witnesses of Christ's healing in the 21st century. Thank you, Ron, for sharing this story with us.—*Jim Conrad, Perkasie, Pa.*

How shall we then live?

Thank you for publishing two powerful poems in the Aug. 9 issue. Michael Martin's "Breaking and Entering" speaks to me as a parable that I will ponder for many days. Earl Martin's "Finding Pulse" speaks clearly about hope and pain. Both bring me face to face with the question, How shall I then live?—*Louise Newswanger, Salem, Ore.*

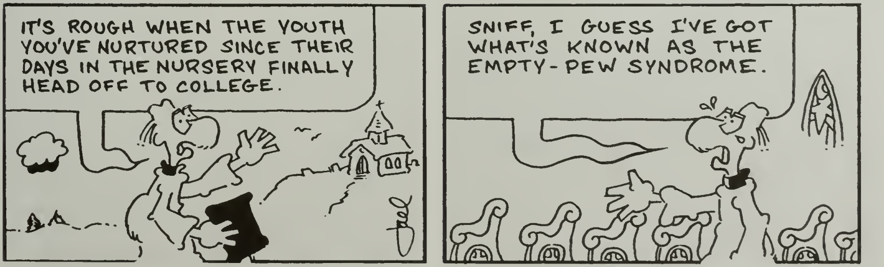
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Retirement is a time to:

- ○ Travel (26%)
- ○ Recreate (7%)
- ○ Do service (43%)
- ○ Uncertain (12%)
- ○ I may not retire (12%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


IT'S ROUGH WHEN THE YOUTH YOU'VE NURTURED SINCE THEIR DAYS IN THE NURSERY FINALLY HEAD OFF TO COLLEGE.
SNIFF, I GUESS I'VE GOT WHAT'S KNOWN AS THE EMPTY-PEW SYNDROME.

IN BRIEF

Colombian pastor speaks at Mennonite church

Maria Elena Racines Cobos, pastor of the Lutheran Church of San Juan in Piedecuesta, Colombia, visited and preached at First Mennonite Church, Champaign-Urbana, Ill., July 10-11. Racines presented a sermon during Sunday worship and spoke during an evening gathering about civil strife facing her church and others in war-torn Colombia. She also presented a seminar July 11 at the University of Illinois on the population displaced by fighting in Colombia. *—Conrad Wetzel*

MCC invites economic discussion

Mennonite Central Committee is inviting Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to discuss economic responses to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. MCC staff have worked with Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers to write two papers exploring possibilities for economic action to promote justice, peace and security in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Such action could include shareholder activism, divestment or consumer boycotts. The papers are available at www.mcc.org/papers. MCC has a 55-year history of working for relief and development in Palestine and a 30-year history of working with Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers.*—MCC*

Shalom Mennonite joins Central District

GOSHEN, Ind.—Shalom Mennonite Congregation, Harrisonburg, Va., joined Central District Conference (CDC) at its annual meeting June 23-25 at Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., becoming the first congregation in Mennonite Church USA to switch conferences following criteria outlined by the denomination's Executive Board.

Prior to the vote, Shalom member Ruby Friesen Zehr and pastor Earl Zimmerman shared examples of congregational life with CDC delegates. Among reasons Shalom asked to change its conference affiliation, Zimmerman said, was that it wanted to join a conference in which Shalom's ministry and identity would find a better fit.

Delegates expressed concerns and affirmation about the decision to accept Shalom as a member. The three-year process ended with a vote of 77 percent in favor of Shalom joining CDC.*—Central District Reporter*

Historic peace churches 'Seeking Peace'

GOSHEN, Ind.—In the face of the war in Iraq and mounting violence around the globe, the country's historic peace churches—Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA and the Society of Friends —will join in a conference, "Seeking Peace: the Courage to Be Nonviolent."

Held in partnership with the Plowshares Peace Studies Collaborative, the conference is a multifaceted, intergenerational gathering to provide opportunities to build mentoring relationships and explore practical and intellectual approaches to peace and peacemaking. The conference will take place Sept. 8-11 in Indianapolis and is open to people of all faiths.

Deb Franz

Get your motor running

Participants in a motorcycle rally to raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee ride through Sutton, Neb., July 31. Twenty-seven bikers raised $2,605 for MCC's Zimbabwe Emergency Assistance. *—Mennonite Church USA*

A stitch in time

Elinor Showalter, left, Lois Oberholzer, middle, and Cora Horst, right, quilt together at the Cumberland Valley Relief Center near Chambersburg, Pa. Volunteers gather weekly to stitch comforters for those in need and to put together quilts that will be sold at Mennonite Central Committee relief sales to raise money for MCC's work across the globe.*—MCC*

Speakers will include Peggy Gish of Christian Peacemaker Teams, Ann K. Riggs of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States, Lisa Schirch of Eastern Mennonite University, and C.T. Vivian, founder of the Black Action Strategies and Information Center.

For more information or to register, contact Dean Johnson at 574-535-7728, deanjj@goshen.edu or www.plowsharesproject.org.*—Jennifer Rupp*

Japanese Mennonite leader dies at 80

STRASBOURG, France—Takashi Yamada, 80, a former Mennonite World Conference leader and one of the strongest, most creative Anabaptist church leaders the Mennonite church in Japan has produced, died June 20 in Fukuoka, Japan, where he had been receiving treatment for stomach cancer.

For nearly 48 years, Yamada was a Mennonite pastor in the rural Kobayashi district of southern Japan. He also worked at building a voluntary network of Japanese Christians in the remote agricultural area and towns with a strong emphasis on discipleship, says his eldest son, Nozomu.

Beginning in 1960, he worked with missionary Paul Boschman at evangelism and church planting in the rural town of Kobayashi, where he lived, and then along the Bullet Train line, where some of his members had moved. Twice a year he visited the network of small groups. He and Boschman also wrote and published material on the church growth movement in Japan.

"Yamada is best known for his efforts to make

Takashi Yamada

Mennonite churches in Japan genuinely Anabaptist," says Robert Ramseyer, former missionary in Japan. "Yamada read Anabaptist materials and then wrestled with what this means for being a disciple of Jesus in Japan today."

Yamada is survived by his wife, Yoshiko, who Nozomu says was "his best supporter for 48 years" and "one of the best messengers of discipleship in Christ." Other family survivors include three sons: Nozomu, a professor of Christian church history and creed at Nanzan University; Shin, a medical doctor and psychiatrist at the Fukouka Kyoritsu Hospital; and Jun, a professor of archeology and Christian arts at Seinan Gakuin University; two daughters: Aiko, a quilting and patchwork artist, and Reiko, a kindergarten teacher; and four grandchildren. All five children are actively involved in their father's church community.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Former MWC president elected to parliament

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia—A former Mennonite World Conference president and leader of the Meserete Kristos Church has been elected to the city council of Ethiopia's capital. Million Belete will take office in September in the Regional Parliament, which serves Addis Ababa.

Belete's political entry is a radical departure from the thinking and practice of Mennonites and most evangelical Christians in Ethiopia, says Carl E. Hanson, resource development director for Miserete Kristos College in Addis Ababa.

Belete led a campaign by the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia to encourage Christians to participate as voters and candidates in the May national elections. When someone asked him why he didn't run for office himself, he decided to pray about it and asked others to pray, too.

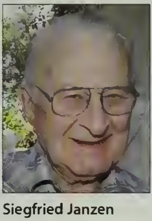
He was told he would not win if he ran as an independent, so he accepted the invitation of the six-month-old Coalition for Unity and Democracy party to run on its ticket. Belete won the seat. A student from Miserete Kristos College was also elected.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Mennonite Mission Network

DEO volunteers commissioned with wheat

Participants "thresh" stalks of wheat during the July 24 DEO (Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach) commissioning at Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita, Kan., symbolizing Jesus' words in John 12:24. Eight volunteers were commissioned to join the Christian Service program.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Longtime MCC worker Siegfried Janzen dies



Siegfried Janzen

WINNIPEG—Siegfried Janzen, who served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in various capacities over the past 60 years, died Aug. 2 in Petitcodiac, N.B. He was 84.

He was born in Ukraine in 1920. The family fled persecution in the Soviet Union and arrived in Canada in 1927.

As a conscientious objector, Janzen did alternative service during World War II in Ontario, where he met and married his wife, Margaret, in 1945. The couple served with MCC in the Netherlands and West Germany. From 1945 to 1950 they helped establish refugee camps and helped 6,000 refugees get to Canada.

As a member of MCC's community justice ministry in Canada, Janzen trained others in victim-offender mediation and advocated on behalf of inmates who were making an effort to reconcile with those they had offended.

Janzen is survived by his wife, four daughters, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren. —*MCC Canada*

'Journey of Life' walkway at Hesston College

HESSTON, Kan.—Construction on a "Journey of Life" walkway connecting Hesston College to Schowalter Villa, Dyck Arboretum and beyond is expected to begin this fall.

The $30,000 walkway is a cooperative effort between the college, the villa and the city of Hesston. Hesston College and Schowalter Villa will contribute $7,500 each, while the city will provide in-kind services, such as marking a crosswalk and installing crosswalk signs. Other project components include landscaping, lights, construction of one or more gazebos, benches with shade structures and signs.—*Hesston College*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Giving to Goshen and EMU increases

Goshen (Ind.) College alumni, churches and friends gave to the school $6,472,405 for the fiscal year ending June 30, an increase of nearly $1 million over the previous year. Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., received $5,151,962 in total contributions for the 2004-05 fiscal year ending June 30, a 4.5 percent increase.—*Goshen College and Eastern Mennonite University*

Numbers

Average annual health-care costs of an elderly person with income under $10,000/year: $14,692. Average annual health-care costs of an elderly person with income over $30,000/year: $8,855. Average amount each American spends on health care each year: $4,887. Average amount each Canadian spends on health care each year: $2,707. Number of peer-reviewed articles on climate change published in scientific journals between 1993 and 2003 that disputed the reality of human-caused global warming: 0.—*Yes!*

Correction: Laurie L. Oswald (Aug. 9, page 7) will become editor for Mennonite Women USA on Nov. 1. The half-time position includes editing *Timbrel*, produced by MW USA with support from Canadian Women in Mission. She succeeds Cathleen Hockman-Wert, who founded *Timbrel* in 1997.

Play *is not* the opposite

Mennonite Mission Network

Leta Bullard and Lucy Bawel of El Dorado, Ark., serving at Okanagan Gleaners in Oliver, B.C.

Oren and Arlene Horst, Goshen, Ind., spent June and July in 2003 at Drift Creek Camp, Lincoln City, Ore. The couple worked in the kitchen and office and did maintenance and janitorial work during summer camp.

# of work

How to find a comfy alternative to a comfortable retirement

by Lynn Miller

If you read the advertisements in any of the "money" magazines, you know that the pot of gold at the end of the American Dream is a "comfortable retirement." But if you look closely you will also see that achieving that part of the American Dream has turned out to be an emotional nightmare for many people. Do you really think you are going to enjoy spending your years until retirement watching the market tape running across the bottom of the screen trying to decide if you have enough saved up? And do you really want to spend the rest of your life crunching the numbers trying to figure out how much you can spend this week, this month or this year without creating the disaster of outliving your savings?

Do you really want to spend the rest of your life crunching the numbers trying to figure out how much you can spend this week, this month or this year without creating the disaster of outliving your savings?

Despite the fact that "I'm retired" sounds like "I was tired before, and now I am tired all over again," the idea of retiring from a life of work isn't the problem. After all, God told the Levites in the book of Numbers to retire from their work of service in the Temple at age 55. They could assist their brothers to fulfill an obligation, but they were not to work anymore. I like that idea, not to work anymore. But what do you do then? Again, the problem isn't retirement but how we define retirement. We get into trouble when the only alternative to work we can think of is play.

Once I visited a fellow who had just moved to a new retirement community in the middle of Florida to be near his wife's aging parents. To his dismay, this location is not near anything—no beaches, lakes or amusement parks. Fifteen hundred homes occupied by retired people who have nowhere to go and nothing to do when they get there. So they have organized "play groups" for themselves. They get together to play golf, cards or bocci ball. Some say the older we get the more childlike we become. My friend says this retirement community is probably where that saying came from.

Continued on page 10

There are better ways to spend the rest of your life than going from play-date to play-date.

Margaret Prough

Don Schroeder (left) of Moundridge, Kan., and Harry Prough of Goshen, Ind., relive the "good old days" as they collaborate on a SOOP project in Carlsbad, N.M. Schroeder and Prough did their 1-W service together in Colorado 50 years ago.

Continued from page 9

But what if the alternative to work isn't play at all? Many of us have done some sort of service, maybe a three-year Mennonite Central Committee term, maybe a shorter voluntary service assignment, maybe just a week or two with Habitat for Humanity or just here and there doing something good in our communities we were not being paid to do. That was a good idea then, it helped others, and we enjoyed it.

Why not extend that good idea into our retirement years? Why not go from work to a second service? Why not start or join a second service team instead of a retirement play group when we stop working for a living?

That is something I'm looking forward to. In fact, that is something my wife and I have already begun doing. At ages 63 and 65, we have assets of time, talents and money, assets we can afford to give away. And we have found people in other places with the assets of passion, initiative and a vision to make life better for themselves and their communities. And our second service is in finding just the right combinations of our assets plus their assets that will bring about something none of us could have done by ourselves.

By using MMA's retirement planning resources, my wife and I now know how to minimize our chances of outliving our retirement savings. And by learning how to determine when enough is enough concerning our current needs, we have found we can support ourselves with my half-time work and my wife's Social Security. So we are entering into our second service early, planning to spend three or four months a year with two or three other couples in Central America as a self-funded assets-looking-for-assets group. And that feels like a comfy fit with Jesus' words about "coming to serve rather than be served."

In my church, if you have a group, you have to have a name for it with an appropriately memorable acronym. We were thinking about calling ourselves Seniors Evading Retirement Villages (SERV), but someday we may want to use a retirement center to come and go from, and we don't want to burn that bridge just yet. Then we thought of calling ourselves the Asset Alliance (AA), but someone already has that acronym, and besides, we only have three steps (list your assets, look for other assets, then just do it). We considered Assets Looking For Assets Looking For Alliances (ALFALFA), but the acronym described us a little too accurately as the hayseeds we are. At the moment, all we can think of is the Grateful Old Folks Enriching Retirement Service (The GOFERS).

There have to be better names for this than these, and we are open to suggestions. But more importantly, there are better ways to spend the rest of your life than going from play-date to play-date. And the world is open and full of opportunities, many within a mile or two of your front door. And from our experience, this is a lot more fun than lying in bed each morning trying to figure out which games you can play today without going broke before you die.

Lynn Miller is stewardship theologian for MMA and worships at First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

David Fisher Fast/Mennonite Mission Network

Waldo and Elinor Neufeld of Abbotsford, B.C., volunteers with SOOP, help keep the campus of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., looking beautiful.

iStock

Bearing fruit in old age

It is the quality of our spirit that counts.

by Martha Kolb-Wyckoff

The righteous "will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green."—Psalm 92:14 (NIV)

Some people say, "It's no fun getting old." You have likely heard the slogan "Getting old isn't for sissies." We are well acquainted with bodies that get diseased, legs that lose their strength and ears that can't hear. And we know that as we age, often our memory fails, our mental processes are not as sharp and we generally can't manage life the way we once could. That is the bad news about aging.

But there is good news as well. One part of us has the potential to only grow better, stronger and more robust as we age: our spirit. While we can't see our spirits, we certainly feel the quality of one's spirit. When I visit someone whose body is wasting away but I come away uplifted, encouraged and blessed, I know I have been with someone with a healthy, robust spirit.

Stewarding our bodies and minds is important. After all, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit and we must care for them the best we can. But in reality our bodies eventually will deteriorate, and our minds will slow down. And when death comes, the physical part of us dies; our bodies return to dust.

But our spirits are a different story. Our spirits need not age in the sense of decay and deterioration, and they do not die. It is God's intention that our spirits keep growing, developing and becoming more attractive. When we invite God's Spirit to take up residence in our spirit, we become God's children, but it remains to be seen whether we become Christlike, exhibiting Spirit fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23).

Becoming Christlike and bearing Spirit fruit is both a grace and a discipline. We must open ourselves to Christ's spirit, but we must daily practice spiritual attitudes. What does it mean for Jesus Christ to be formed in us? Our spirit is the part of us that connects with God's Spirit. And our spirit is the reservoir from which flow our attitudes and our character; our spirit makes us what we are.

Being Christlike doesn't just happen. We become like Christ as we develop habits and practice disciplines that cultivate Christlikeness in us. Our spirit is nurtured by what we read, what we watch, by the things we allow to fill our minds and our lives. Paul in his letter to the Philippians had some practical advice: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Philippians 4:8 NIV)

Becoming Christlike and bearing Spirit fruit is both a grace and a discipline.

I'm thinking of a woman with a healthy, Christlike spirit who died some time ago. I watched her body slowly deteriorate; her mind and her ability to process things declined as well, though more slowly. But up to the end she maintained a robust, positive, Christlike spirit. After her death, the following prayer was found printed in her Bible: "Jesus Christ, be formed in me today." In that prayer I find the key to her Christlike spirit. I imagine she regularly prayed that prayer, inviting God's help as she chose each day to be patient rather than demanding, peaceful rather than anxious, joyful rather than discouraged.

When someone dies, we don't talk primarily about how beautiful they were or how intelligent or how much money they made. Rather we talk about how they were interested in others, what a good friend they were, what a gracious, Christlike spirit they displayed. It is the quality of our spirit that counts. We are never too young or too old to begin praying, "Lord Jesus, be formed in me today."

Martha Kolb-Wyckoff is chaplain at Rockhill Mennonite Community in Sellersville, Pa..

A glimpse of the nature and grace of God

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An act of *grace*

by Anne Siegrist

Uncle Melvin Hertzler was a quiet man. I never knew his wife, Susie, except as a pretty face on a photograph my mother gave me. Mother looked sad when I asked about Susie. She and her new baby had died, Mother said, leaving Uncle Melvin to raise the four remaining children. He had done an admirable job.

Uncle Melvin never had much money, and he and his children lived simply. The summer kitchen of his farmhouse in Elverson, Pa., was built in the 1700s and showed the unadorned style of that era. Sturdy but modest additions had been added onto the farmhouse in the 1800s.

In years to come, I understood that Uncle Melvin did not perform that generous act because of who I was but because of who he was.

"Pull up to the gas tank; I want to give your horse some oats before you head home," said Uncle Melvin to my father on one of our visits. I was astonished. I had never known anyone that generous.

My own parents feared poverty and did not easily share what they had. I grew up dreaming of finding money on the ground. The dream money consisted of nickels, dimes, quarters and pennies in abundance, free for the taking. It was a comforting dream that lasted for many years.

I and Martha, Uncle Melvin's youngest child, graduated from Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School, then packed our bags for Harrisonburg, Va., where we enrolled at Eastern Mennonite College. I understood that my tuition was a sacrifice made by my parents, so I did not ask them for spending money.

"Would you like to go home with me over our break?" Martha asked one day. I was happy to visit her home again. I enjoyed the quiet assembling for meals and devotions, the efficiency of their housekeeper, the tranquil lifestyle and the stability of the Hertzler farm. I experienced a harmony there I had not known in my own family.

The weekend went quickly, and the time came to say goodbye. We paused in the wide, cool hallway of the old farmhouse, our suitcases on the floor around us. Suddenly Uncle Melvin reached in his pockets and pulled out money. He stood there, holding dollar bills, quarters, nickels, dimes and pennies in his hands.

"Here," he said. "I don't have much cash, but I'll give you everything I have." Then he painstakingly counted out the money and divided it evenly between Martha and me. I could scarcely believe what was happening. I was not his child, but he was treating me as if I were.

In years to come, I understood that Uncle Melvin did not perform that generous act because of who I was but because of who he was.

He never knew that the memory of that one small, spontaneous act would follow me for more than half a century. Uncle Melvin cheerfully gave away all the money he had with him that day. More importantly, he gave me something he never suspected: a glimpse of the nature and grace of God. Of such as Uncle Melvin is the kingdom of God.

Anne Siegrist lives in Jasper, N.Y.

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DAs

by Ray Barrier

God places designated angels in our lives and invites us to be designated angels for others.

Do you remember when Jesus told two of his disciples: "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt. … Untie it and bring it here." (Luke 19: 30,31) How did Jesus know there was a person with a colt in place to help him? Have you not wondered why an angel didn't simply bring Jesus a young colt? When is the last time you saw a real angel? Do you know anyone personally who has seen an angel? I've thought of incidents in my life when someone was in the right place just at the right time to give needed assistance. I call this a DA, or designated angel.

I first thought of this concept when I received a letter from a former student about 20 years after she was in my class. She wrote that she was subjected to abuse by her alcoholic parents. Her parents were afraid to go to sleep at night. They forced her to drive them around most of the night. She then had to attend school the next day with little or no sleep. Once she went to sleep in my class and fell out of her chair. She said I picked her up and did not make a big scene by reprimanding her in front of the class but simply continued as if it had not happened. She said that act of compassion made her rethink her suicide plan. She is now a successful businessperson, and her parents have turned their lives around. I only remembered the incident after reading her letter. I had no idea that to her I was a DA.

I thought of all the DAs put in place to help me. When my daughter was born, our family qualified for food stamps on my rural teacher's salary. There were several people in our congregation, Big Spring Mennonite Church, who acted as DAs for my family. The pastor, Paul Mishler, helped us build our house. Another church member anonymously gave money when it was badly needed. Another family in our church invited my wife and me to lunch. This family's many acts of kindness served as the reason we began attending Big Spring. They continue even today in the role of DAs in the most critical times.

These DAs were there at the time when there seemed no way out of a problem. The strange thing is that none of these people realized they were being DAs. I wonder if the man with the colt had any idea Jesus had put him in the right place at the right time.

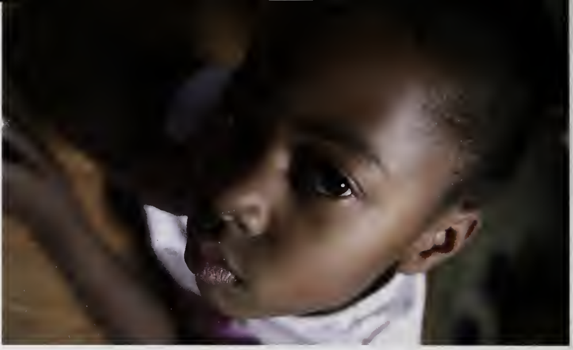
If you look into your past, you, too, may see when God placed a DA in your life just when you needed one. Think of turning points in your life and who was there to help. Do you think having people in place at the most critical time to help you is just luck or a divine plan?

What characteristics does God consider in choosing a person to be a DA? I would not have chosen me, if I were God. However, I do see some common characteristics in the people I see as DAs in my life. They possess a caring and compassionate quality. They have a real relationship with God and are available for God to use. They seem to go out of their way to assist others, even when the assistance doesn't seem appreciated. Most of all, they all possess a seven-day-per-week faith that does good deeds without drawing attention to themselves.

Since I have never knowingly seen a real angel, I am so glad God puts in place DAs. I hope you and I will have the gifts and the right spirit to be available to serve as DAs for God. Designated angels serve God just as the man with the colt did and are positioned to be in the right place at the right time. I thank God for my DAs who are just as welcomed as if they were real angels.

If you look into your past, you, too, may see when God placed a DA in your life just when you needed one.

Ray Barrier is a member of Big Spring Mennonite Church, Rileyville, Va.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‘I want to become a pilot and *serve the Lord’*

by Nancy Charles

Ethiopian Mennonites help AIDS orphans.

Separated from her sister two years ago, 9-year-old Meron Masrecha, is an orphan. Tears form in her eyes as she yearns to see her sister once again. “She lives far away, and I can’t see her,” she says, trying to contain her tears.

And why shouldn’t she be sad? In Ethiopia, where at least 5,000 adults are infected with the AIDS virus each week, government-sponsored organizations as well as many NGOs are working hard to combat this silent killer. The 1.2 million orphans like Meron in Ethiopia, the third highest number in Africa, are left behind to battle their bleak future.

But Meron is one of the lucky ones. Her Aunt Tadeletsch took the girl in when Meron’s mother died of HIV/AIDS two years earlier. “It was difficult to feed another mouth, … but this family and God wants us to stay together,” says Tadeletsch.

There is still hope among the devastation of HIV/AIDS, one orphan at a time.

The aunt has a family of her own and didn’t know how she would provide for one more child. She inquired around her local community about extra support. That’s when she heard about the work of the local Mennonite church, Meserete Kristos, with HIV/AIDS.

Meserete Kristos’ HIV/AIDS program places regional HIV/AIDS coordinators throughout the country. Regional coordinators aid and support local Mennonite churches on how to address HIV/AIDS in their communities and among their members. Local initiatives such as working with the churches’ youth group and drama team help address issues of stigmatization and exclusion among church and community members. The program also has a small budget that provides school uniforms, nutritional supplements and school books, or a one-time orphan support grant of 300 Birr, or $35.

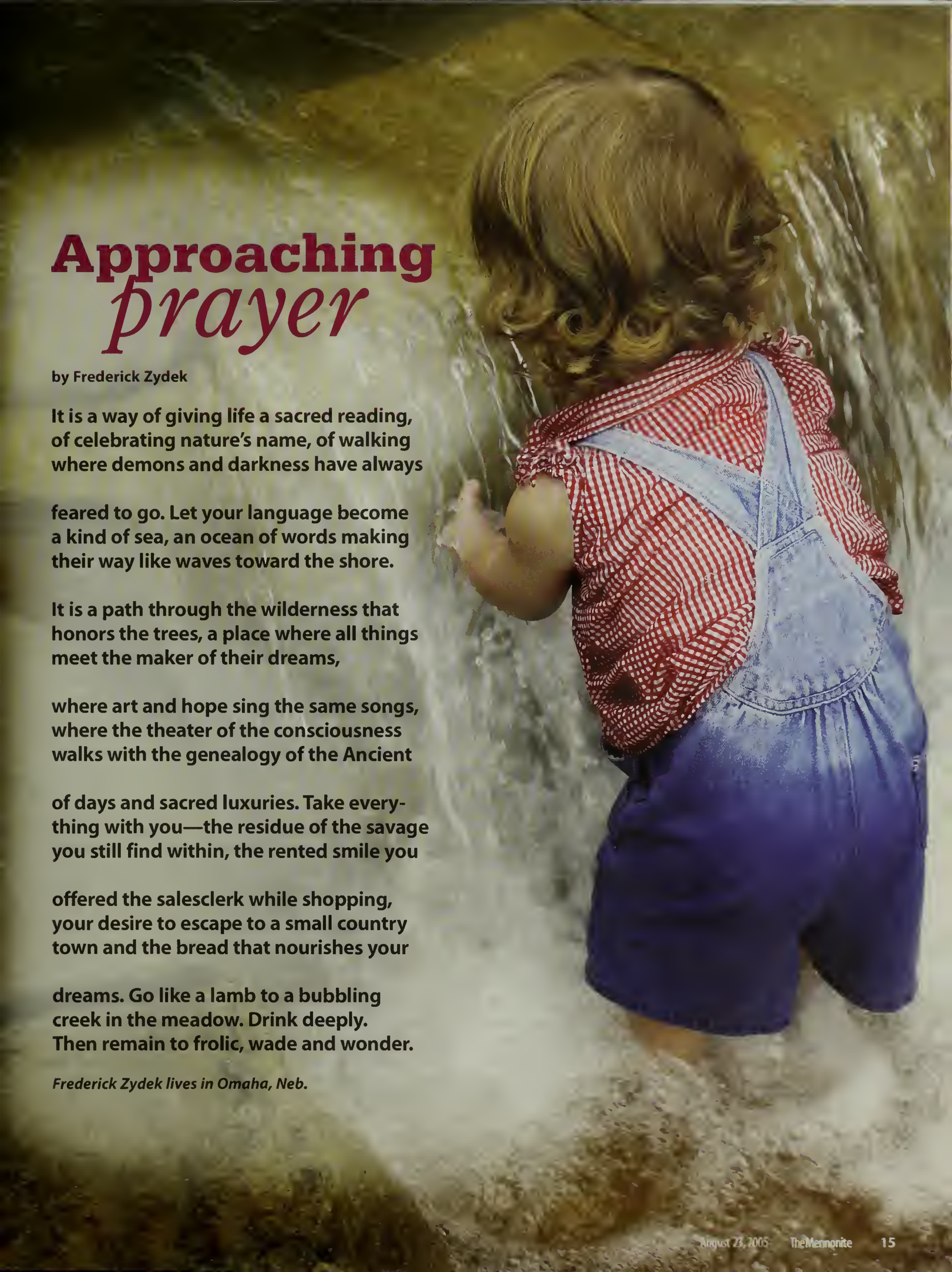
Tadeletsch was given 300 Birr for Meron. Ika Kejella, regional HIV/AIDS coordinator for the Jima region of Ethiopia, advised Tadeletsch to purchase sheep in order to stretch the one-time grant.

A radiant smile returns to Meron’s face as she talks about her future dreams. “I fed the sheep until they became fat, then my aunt sold them at the market,” says Meron. With the profits, she hopes to continue to go to school and invest in more sheep.

“My favorite subject in school is math,” Meron says. “I want to become a pilot and serve the Lord.”

There is still hope among the devastation of HIV/AIDS, one orphan at a time.

Nancy Charles is a Mennonite Central Committee worker in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with her husband, Daniel Charles. She teaches English at Meserete Kristos College. The statistics are from United Nations Aids Report.



Approaching *prayer*

by Frederick Zydek

It is a way of giving life a sacred reading,
of celebrating nature's name, of walking
where demons and darkness have always

feared to go. Let your language become
a kind of sea, an ocean of words making
their way like waves toward the shore.

It is a path through the wilderness that
honors the trees, a place where all things
meet the maker of their dreams,

where art and hope sing the same songs,
where the theater of the consciousness
walks with the genealogy of the Ancient

of days and sacred luxuries. Take every-
thing with you—the residue of the savage
you still find within, the rented smile you

offered the salesclerk while shopping,
your desire to escape to a small country
town and the bread that nourishes your

dreams. Go like a lamb to a bubbling
creek in the meadow. Drink deeply.
Then remain to frolic, wade and wonder.

Frederick Zydek lives in Omaha, Neb.

A baptism in

Folk Art
On All My Holy Mountain
A modern Fraktur

Courtesy photo

Diane and Philip Katz at their booth at Charlotte 2005.

A reflection from new Mennonites at a booth at Charlotte 2005

by Diane Katz

I wept as I entered the grey concrete subterranean expanse where we were to be 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. for the coming week. This cold cave was what we had been heading toward for the past year?

Our job was to help create an instant village out of 10,000 Mennonites, some tables and the airport-like concourse of the Charlotte (N.C.) Convention Center. Officially, as Mennonites, I and Philip, my husband, were one month old. This was a baptism by extremely full immersion.

The conference began July 4, one year after our first visit to Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship. That first visit, on our nation's day of celebrating an independence won by war, was prompted by a desire to find a peace church in this confused and violent world. After all, the side of the family Philip most resembles had been Mennonite since colonial times. The last Mennonite, Philip's great-great-grandfather, was a musician. He left the church to play the organ and father an orchestra of children he insistently named Eldon Beethoven, Millicent Mozart and Myrtle Mendelson.

Discovered to be publishers, one month after that first visit we were planning *A Word in Season, How Good It Is!*, a year of sermons by 11 bright and lively preachers in our congregation. We started by thinking of the sermons elaborately decorated with fraktur. Instead we published a second book, *On All My Holy Mountain: A Modern Fraktur*. Peace-oriented Bible verses are presented in this handbound book as "visual hymns" of fraktur, the wonderfully playful folk art that flourished among Mennonites in early North America. These two books are what motivated us to become, we are told, the first single church to have a booth at a Mennonite Convention.

> **We discussed Ezra Pound, the Ark of the Covenant's location in Ethiopia, one woman's discomfort when treated as a token African-American Mennonite and the availability of Amish railroad-salvaged canned goods.**

One thing led to another. Our church includes the dear people at Rutba House, an urban hospitality community in the troubled Walltown neighborhood of Durham, N.C. They also have two new books we offered at our booth: *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism* and *To Baghdad and Beyond: How I Got Born Again in Babylon*. By special arrangement with their publishers, Wipf & Stock, we were also able to offer 75 titles of the company's Herald Press reprints. This required us to lug an old bookcase to Charlotte, which provided the perfect five-foot-high base to send Sandra's purple fraktur banner soaring a dozen feet high.

We chatted with, hugged and observed thousands of Mennonites. We discussed Ezra Pound, the Ark of the Covenant's location in Ethiopia, one woman's discomfort when

Mennonites

treated as a token African-American Mennonite and the availability of Amish railroad-salvaged canned goods. A Mennonite musician told us that at his home in Florida, many Christians are not interested in working for peace, and most peace activists are not interested in Christianity. Mennonites, however, are called to a double mission of witness for peace and Christ.

We asked each person who looks at *On All My Holy Mountain* whether they've heard of fraktur. Many had not. Those who know fraktur can be most knowledgeable, and we took up our pad and pen to take notes.

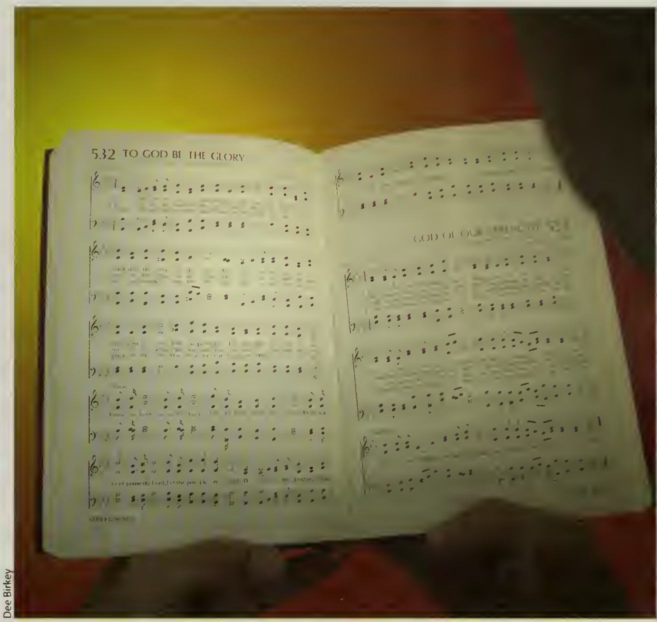
With our fraktur-inspired craft items, books, baby rattles, CDs, fraktur kits and Mennonite dough bowls (all created by church members), we were often asked if we are a Ten Thousand Villages shop. We said, "No, we're One Thousand Aspirations." People laughed.

Teaching fraktur to two classes each morning at the convention, I progressed through the elementary school years class by class, from first to sixth grade. As a new Mennonite, I found myself in the interesting position of observing the creative/emotional/spiritual health of the 200 Mennonite children. All ages responded to the playful creativity of fraktur! And as one child decorated the scripture "Love your enemies," she said, "If you love them, they're not your enemy."

A delightful young woman with piercings here and there became enamored with the fraktur in *Holy Mountain* and ran off to a Charlotte tattoo parlor. The next day, she pulled down the back of her spaghetti-strap top to show me her contribution to fraktur in the 21st century. I was amazed. So well done, it looked like my hand tattooed the fraktur between her shoulder blades. Not being her mother, I can say that it is the nicest tattoo I've ever seen, on one of the most darling 20-year-olds I've ever met. Many seeds were planted in Charlotte. May God bless each little seed.

Diane Katz is a member of Chapel Hill (N.C.) Mennonite Fellowship.

A Word in Season and *On All My Holy Mountain* are available from Rosenberry books at www.rosenberry-books.com, 800-723-0336. *School(s) for Conversion* and *To Baghdad and Beyond* are available from Wipf & Stock Publishers at www.wipfandstock.com, 541-334-1528.



Dee Birkey

Hymn

by Charles Semones

How the notes, like sparks, leap upward from the page
when the Holy Spirit hits its stride inside the clapboard
meetinghouse. How the old Broadman glows like fox fire
in the pale hands of ancestors. How the sturdy hymn

pleases the ear of God as he observes another Sabbath's
bowing of the head. Look how he spins out his grace like a spider
on progenitor and descendant alike. The hymn, resonant
in the mouths of dead sopranos, ascends on the wings of morning.

Charles Semones lives in Harrodsburg, Ky.

Where will we be 25 years from now?

James Schrag is executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

As executive director of Mennonite Church USA I'm responsible to keep the big picture in mind—a panorama filled with both mountains and valleys, deserts and green pastures.

In 1980, as a 35-year-old pastor, I was asked to co-chair the joint planning committee for Bethlehem '83 with Myron Augsburger. It was the first of three joint meetings of Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church delegates, followed by Normal '89 and Wichita '95. Since being called to churchwide leadership in 1996, I've been privileged to be part of the inner workings of what we first called integration, then transformation, which resulted in the formation of Mennonite Church USA.

These 25 years—a generation—have brought many surprises. No one would have guessed in 1980 that in 2005 we would be part of a national church body with USA in our official name. No one would have guessed, even 10 years ago, that the 2005 assembly would be held so far away from the population centers of Mennonite life and work.

If we keep pace with the trends in our country, by 2030, half our membership, like half the population of the United States, will be Hispanic.

A critical part of leadership is having the long view. With that long view, effective leadership requires a tenacity to move forward—keeping focus on what you can see on the far horizon while being prepared for the unseen surprises along the journey.

What possibilities can I see 25 years from now, through another generation, by 2030?

First, 25 years from now, I think the wisdom of creating a national identity for Mennonites in the United States as Mennonite Church USA will be clear. If we water the missional potential we are now planting, U.S. Mennonites will no longer be confused with our Amish cousins in the public's view. Likewise, we will have capitalized on the many opportunities we have had to take our earthly citizenship seriously, resulting in a new and stronger affirmation of our kingdom citizenship by the coming generation of 25-year-old young adults of 2030.

The coming generation will have discovered the paradox that we cannot be Christlike world citizens until we have owned our citizenship in this country. By 2030 our corporate identity as the people of Mennonite Church USA will be known for our kingdom values and Christlike witness that far exceed our past and present individualized, local identities. The narrow, stereotypical views of our neighbors, of who we are and how we follow Jesus into the world will no longer exist.

Second, 25 years from now, the people of Mennonite Church USA will look different from how they look today. We will, that is, depending on the choices we make today. By 2030, most Mennonites will live in urban areas. If we keep pace with the trends in our country, by 2030, half our membership, like half the population of the United States, will be Hispanic. That means half our congregations will be bilingual or speak Spanish regularly.

On the other had, if we don't recognize this population trend as a sign from God and capture its missional opportunities, a different picture could emerge. The white, dominant culture of Mennonite Church USA today, instead of understanding the movement of God in sending immigrants and other racial/ethnic groups to increase our numbers and spiritually revive the church, could have the look of an elitist, entrenched and diminished vestige of a former era. The result could be racism by default because we lacked the foresight to understand the way God is working in our current experience to renew our church.

What is God doing among us? If we keep that question in front us, 25 years from now, our young adults will be writing about the many wonderful surprises God had in store for the people of Mennonite Church USA in the first part of the 21st century.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Crossing borders**—Lisa Weaver
- **The crisis in church Web site design**—David Gillaspey
- **Old Testament salvation**—Ted Grimsrud

Potential pastors named on 'Call Wall'

Among the 180 names, 82 are teenagers, and 53 are in their 20s.

The "Call Wall" may have been one of the most simple—and surprising—spotlights for convention participants at Charlotte 2005 in early July (see July 26, page 17). For the price of a large bulletin board and some construction paper, Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada garnered 180 names of potential pastoral leaders. Many of them were the names of young people ripe for shoulder-tapping.

The wall's popularity showed that a silent presence—not glitz or cost—was the prime factor for it becoming an island of attraction in a sea of 8,600 youth and adults. Placed at the hub of hallways at the Charlotte (N.C.) Convention Center, the bulletin board wall beckoned countless people to put names of potential leaders on its giant face.

"I've never seen anything get more mileage for minimal effort than this Call Wall," says Keith Harder, director of Mennonite Church USA's Congregational and Ministerial Leadership.

"The wall's silent presence is a metaphor for our efforts toward calling leaders in the church," Harder said. "The effort should always be among us without us having to call a lot of special attention to it. It should just be an integral part of who we are as a spiritual family."

Diane Zaerr Brenneman, denominational minister with Congregational and Ministerial Leadership, prayed for the stack of 180 names in her hand during the concluding U.S. adult delegate session July 9 (photo at right).

"We dedicate to God's care and leading the 180 potential pastors nominated on these cards," she prayed. "We also dedicate to God the nominators as they engage in mentoring and walking with these 180 people over time."

Forty cards named people ages 20 through 24. Thirty-seven named people aged 18. Twenty-three cards named 19-year-olds, and 22 cards named people 16 years of age. Three people in their 50s were named, while 13 cards named people aged 25 through 29.

Seventy-one of the cards named females and 88 cards named males. (With 15 of the names, the sex was unclear, and six were off-task.) Fourteen people were named more than once, with one person receiving the highest total of 20 nominations.

"More important than our office having the names is that the nominators take initiative back home to talk with their nominee about their gifts and potential for ministerial leadership," Brenneman says.

Andy Brubacher Kaethler, director of the !Explore program that helps 11th- and 12th-graders discern God's call in their life, agrees.

Everett J Thomas

Diane Zaerr Brenneman, denominational minister with Mennonite Church USA's Congregational and Ministerial Leadership, holds 180 names of possible new pastors at Charlotte 2005.

"The purpose of this wall was to inspire each of us in the church to take initiative and to encourage the gifts and leadership in others," he says. About two dozen of the names are !Explore participants Andy plans to contact for follow-up discussions.

Executive Leadership has charged Harder, Brenneman and their staff with guiding the development of a culture of call throughout Mennonite Church USA. They did this at Charlotte 2005 through a variety of seminars that drew more than 1,000 participants. Brenneman says that the popularity of the Call Wall and the seminars showed that the seeds planted for the culture of call take root best when sown in community.

"The energy generated at [Charlotte 2005] shows that we do this culture of call thing best when we don't try to do it alone," Brenneman says. "Scriptures teach us that we really can't do anything alone and that we must take someone with us. Everybody in the church should be replicating themselves.

"I heard a story about someone ushering in their church," Brenneman says. "Every time this person does it, he holds his grandbaby in his arms. That's a good image for reminding us that everyone is called and that everyone should be mentoring the people in their lives."

A churchwide group of about 15 people, called Lead It, assists Harder and Brenneman in promoting and developing the denomination's culture of call. Many Lead It members helped with seminars at Charlotte.—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA*

The effort [to find new pastors] should always be among us without us having to call a lot of special attention to it.—Keith Harder

Gardens create community and peace

Programs in Chicago, St. Louis provide opportunities for outreach, reflection.

We had an artificial rock covering some pipes that was stolen, but then it was returned. That means someone saw it and knew where it belonged and told [the person who stole it] to bring it back.—Mary Hellwig

Surrounded by old row houses and busy streets, empty urban lots are being turned into flowering bits of paradise in an attempt to beautify neighborhoods and build community.

"You wouldn't believe what was here before," community member and volunteer Blanche Cook says of her neighborhood garden in North Lawndale, Chicago. She describes the pile of rubble, rocks and holes that used to grace the lot. Now the space is a garden featuring African flora and will make its vegetable debut this summer.

"The reason behind all this was to have a gathering place," says Velma Johnson, a retired postal worker who volunteers to coordinate upkeep of 12 city gardens in conjunction with the Openlands Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and enhancing public open space in northeastern Illinois.

"Working alongside someone in the garden is a way I feel connected," says Barbara Baumgartner, who spent the past year as an urban gardener in Topeka, Kan., through Mennonite Voluntary Service. Volunteers at the peace center in St. Louis also spend time digging in the dirt, helping children and adults connect with creation and build community with people around them.

"The garden brings the neighbors closer together," says Willie Marks, a retired medical photographer who now works in the garden nearly every day. "It adds a little beauty to the neighborhood—a little greenery instead of just dirt."

The Openlands Project's Neighborhood Youth Garden Corps hires local teenagers to care for the gardens. Zikyia Thompson, 16, says the job is hard and hot, but she loves the friendships that have been formed in just two weeks on the job. The local youth get a chance to meet out-of-towners nearly every day when young volunteers through the DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) program join them.

The St. Louis Mennonite Peace Center has used gardening as a tool for teaching peacemaking. At the request of a local school, peace center volunteer Mary Hellwig coordinated the beginning of a school and community garden.

Many children in the neighborhood solve problems through physical fights, Hellwig says, and at first would try to kill every garden bug or earthworm. But the Columbia Peace and Hope Garden is a no-fight zone, and, she says, "there are a lot of happy faces in the garden."

Following the suicide of a fifth-grader last school year, the garden provided a healing place for many of the boy's classmates. They planted a tree in his memory and presented songs and poetry for its dedication. The garden became a safe place for the children to talk about their own losses to violent deaths. Vandalism and littering in the neighborhood have decreased since the garden was planted, Hellwig says—a sign that the children and other neighbors have begun taking ownership of their community.

Mary Hellwig

In a St. Louis neighborhood where many conflicts are solved through physical fights, the Columbia Peace and Hope Garden creates a space for children to learn peacemaking skills while beautifying their neighborhood.

"We had an artificial rock covering some pipes that was stolen, but then it was returned," Hellwig says. "That means someone saw it and knew where it belonged and told [the person who stole it] to bring it back."

Baumgartner had the opportunity to work with both children and adult gardeners. In a local school, she focused her time on individual students who each had a raised bed in the school's garden lot.

"At first, so many of them were pretty ignorant about how plants grow. They would go out and see the green tops of carrots, and I would tell them what they were. They'd say, 'But carrots are orange,'" Baumgartner says.

By the end of the school year, the children could identify the vegetables growing, and were eager to learn more about the small ecosystems of their plots. Besides the educational aspect of gardening, Baumgartner gave her students the undivided attention many craved.—*Bethany Keener of Mennonite Mission Network*

'Blood Corner' now setting for ministry

Director Rudy Carrasco reads The Wall Street Journal *along with his Bible.*

Blood Corner" they used to call it because of its drive-by shootings and drug deals gone awry. Today you'd never guess that the intersection of Navarro and Howard streets in Pasadena, Calif., once had the highest daytime crime rate in southern California. It's now the fulcrum of a thriving urban ministry that has transformed a 12-block area with enrichment programs for African-American and Latino young people. What made the difference was John Perkins, an African-American Christian leader who has become a legend for modeling holistic urban ministry.

In 1983, Perkins founded the Harambee Christian Family Center on Blood Corner. (Harambee means "Let's push together" in Swahili.) Over the years, Harambee has grown into a multilayered children's and youth ministry, including a K-6 preparatory school, an after-school program to help kids with their homework, plus Bible clubs, summer day camps, and recreation, sports and arts activities. A teen program teaches general employment and business skills, Bible study and college preparation, even offering a computer lab to teach Web design and digital video.

The ministry has been an astounding success. Rudy Carrasco, 37, joined Harambee right out of college. He attended Biola College near Los Angeles for two years, then finished at prestigious Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., with a bachelor's degree in English. Carrasco, who became Harambee's executive director in 2002, lives two doors from the infamous corner.

When Carrasco became Harambee's leader, it was time to face issues common to many organizations emerging from their founding climate. He got help from Mennonite Economic Development Associates through its role as an intermediary for the U.S. government's Compassion Capital Fund (CCF). MEDA provided support for strategic planning and board development, and technology upgrades for administrative functions.

"When an organization is put together by a founder, all the pieces kind of fit together organically because of the people who are involved," says Glen Peterson, MEDA's CCF regional manager in Los Angeles. "When a new executive director takes over he looks at things in a brand new way as to how it is organized and how you'll fit new people into the spots and make the organization move forward."

MEDA contracted with Jeff Wright, Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference minister, to work as a consultant with Carrasco. This partnership enabled Carrasco to better articulate his vision for the organization and helped both him and his board move forward.

"Jeff has been tremendous as a personal coach," says Carrasco. "He has understood the changes we've been going through in Harambee and has been able to coach me through it."

Peterson, meanwhile, helped Carrasco hone his financial skills.

"The kind of reporting required when you accept federal funds is more detailed than what I've had to do in the past," says Carrasco. "Glen was great at explaining it to me and showing me why we have to do the budget this way."

Besides MEDA's assistance, Carrasco says he benefited greatly from watching MEDA in action.

"This includes reading in the press what MEDA is doing, being reminded by MEDA's accounting office of an upcoming report deadline, learning to dot all the i's and cross all the t's, and generally getting to understand what it takes to be a nonprofit at a national level. ... I've learned a lot just by seeing what a heavy responsibility it is, how much detail is involved, learning how to count the cost and seeing what it really takes," says Carrasco. "So that's a secondary learning that's not stated in our proposal. It's been a huge benefit."

MEDA's businesslike approach also appealed to Carrasco. He sees parallels between running a ministry and managing a small company. Harambee, for example, employs 18 staff, a third of them full-time. It owns eight properties in the neighborhood, seven of them contiguous. Only one of the houses has a mortgage, Carrasco says with visible pride. He believes the "bleeding heart" image of social justice activists can benefit from a dose of entrepreneurship. Last year he raised some eyebrows when he wrote an article for *PRISM*, the magazine of Evangelicals for Social Action, critiquing activists for going only part way to help the poor. He said they were good at protesting economic oppression but neglected potential solutions such as long-term investment and wealth creation.

"We've got our protest speech down pat, but we have little data to offer when it comes to teaching how to lift people out of poverty," he wrote. Likewise, he thinks many pastors don't see the value of business and economics.

"What I learn by reading *The Wall Street Journal* affects the way I manage my staff," he says, noting that even nonprofits have to understand money.

"Whether it's the federal government, whether it's MEDA about to make a grant to us, whether it's a private donor, or a church supporting us or a high school kid thinking of giving us some volunteer help ... there are some mechanical things you won't get from reading the Bible. You get it from reading *Fortune* magazine."—*Wally Kroeker for MEDA*

Rudy Carrasco

Social justice activists ... [are] good at protesting economic oppression but neglect potential solutions such as long-term investment and wealth creation.
—Rudy Carrasco

Esther Harder

Students in a Form Six class at Kaberpilla Primary School look over their new exercise books and label them with their names.

MCC sends school supplies to Uganda

12,000 students and 300 teachers in 30 schools benefit from $10,000 gift.

In an area where families were forced from their homes for more than a year because of violent attacks by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) provided funds for school materials to help pupils returning to the classroom.

The rebel LRA has been carrying out violent raids in northern Uganda (see map, page 23) for nearly two decades, sweeping into villages and districts, attacking homes and people and abducting children. Hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes when the attacks spread into the Teso Region of northeastern Uganda in June 2003. Many left for months or more than a year at a time, then returned when LRA fighting and raids moved to another location.

In Katakwi and Kabermaido districts, parents seized their children and the belongings they could carry and fled to neighboring towns, seeking shelter from anyone who would take them in. Those who had no place to go constructed makeshift huts in cramped camps for displaced people. Families were separated from their gardens and their stores of food. Water was equally scarce, with a camp for 18,000 people relying on one functioning borehole. While parents searched for firewood and other necessities, children often spent their days in line waiting to fill jerry cans of water instead of sitting in classrooms filling their minds.

Gradually, rebel attacks in the area lessened, and people moved to camps closer to home or back to their homes, but their struggles have not ceased. Living in camps for the greater part of a year kept families from planting their gardens, so hunger remains high. Most families eat only one meal a day. Many children have returned to their home schools, but there is no money for books, uniforms or other supplies that they might need.

As part of a broader response to the ongoing violence and severe needs in northern Uganda, MCC provided $10,000 for education materials, which were distributed in the Teso region by the Diocese of Soroti, an MCC partner in Uganda.

Nearly 12,000 students and more than 300 teachers in some 30 schools benefited, with a total of 66,240 exercise books, 5,849 pens, 11,827 pencils and 576 sets of mathematical supplies, such as compasses and protractors, given out according to grade level.

In Katakwi District, Abota Primary School's single block of classrooms was bright with its freshly washed and painted walls. In the classrooms, however, only scant clusters of students gathered at the few desks situated in the middle of the room. Many desks were empty. In June 2003, members of the LRA camped at Abota Primary School and burned a classroom block, chasing away families and teaching staff and killing the head teacher. By late this spring, most of the students who fled from Abota Primary School had still not returned to the area.

Yet for the 45 pupils in the Form Six classroom at Kaberpilla Primary School in Kaberamaido District, supplies funded by MCC seemed to spark hope for the future. As their classroom teacher began his social studies lesson on weather, hands quickly shot up in response to questions. For a few moments, hunger was forgotten in the face of new supplies.

MCC has provided emergency relief for families displaced by the long-running insurgency of the LRA and supports peace and reconciliation efforts of interfaith groups. An MCC Global Family program helps fund a girls' school in Masindi District, which includes students abducted in the violent LRA campaigns.—*Esther Harder of Mennonite Central Committee*

For a few moments, hunger was forgotten in the face of new supplies. —Esther Harder

Raids interrupt Zimbabwe relief efforts

Officials remove displaced people shortly after they receive MCC blankets.

Distributions of blankets funded by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) began in late July but are being hampered by the government's eviction of displaced people from churches where they were being sheltered (see page 32).

MCC has provided $60,000 to purchase 5,000 blankets for some of the thousands of families left homeless by a "cleanup" operation the government describes as targeting illegal settlements and informal traders.

United Nations officials say the operation has done a "catastrophic injustice" to up to 700,000 of Zimbabwe's poorest residents.

So far, at least 546 blankets have been distributed to families being assisted by Bulawayo churches. Additional distributions were disrupted when government officials raided churches to move displaced people to transit camps.

Four Brethren in Christ (BIC) churches were affected, with displaced people removed from Lobhengula Brethren in Christ Church hours after they received blankets.

The displaced people have now been moved from transit camps and dispersed into rural areas, and Doris and Jethro Dube, MCC Zimbabwe representatives, report that church leaders are working to determine how to best trace people and meet their emergency needs as the situation changes.

Mediterranean Sea
Tunisia
Morocco
Algeria
Libya
Egypt
Western Sahara
Mauritania
'erde
Senegal
Mali
Niger
Chad
Eritrea
Red Sea
Arabia Sea
bia
Burkina Faso
Benin
Sudan
a-Bissau
Guinea
Togo
Djibouti
Cote D'Ivoire
Nigeria
Central African Rep.
Ethiopia
Somalia
erra Leona
Liberia
Ghana
Gulf of Guinea
Cameroon
Uganda
Rwanda
Kenya
Eq. Guinea
Sao Tome & Principe
Congo
Dem. Rep. of the Congo
Zanzibar (Tanzania)
Gabon
Tanzania
Burundi
Cabinda (Angola)
Seychelles
AFRICA
Angola
Comoros
Zambia
Zimbabwe
Namibia
Malawi
Botswana
Atlantic Ocean
Madagascar
Mozambique
South Africa
Swaziland
Indian Ocean
Lesotho

"It's become very complicated," says Jethro Dube. "The dynamics of the situation on the ground have changed a great deal."

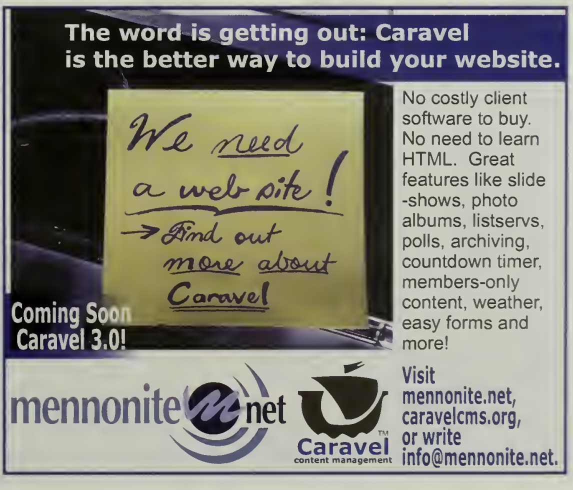
MCC is continuing to monitor the situation to determine how to respond to the needs of the people who have lost their homes, and the Dubes report that some of the funding for blankets may need to be used for food and agricultural items for families resettled into the countryside.

Zimbabwe is facing an impending drought, almost no harvest and a collapsed economy.

> **The dynamics of the situation on the ground have changed a great deal. . . . Let your love flow to us. That's what we need the most.**—Jethro and Doris Dube

Particularly in rural areas, many residents are already short on food, and the Dubes say church leaders fear the plight of displaced families moved to outlying areas will be dire. Moreover, the country has been plagued for months by severe fuel shortages. People throughout the country are forced to walk to work, and travel is extremely difficult. Getting fuel to deliver aid of any sort to outlying areas will be a tremendous challenge, according to the Dubes. In describing the situation and church leaders' exhaustion in trying to respond, Doris Dube asks for prayers from supporters in the church community worldwide (see page 32).

"Let your love flow to us. That's what we need the most," she says.—*Marla Pierson of Mennonite Central Committee*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Paraguay colony at 75

Peter Dyck, second from left, recently traveled to Fernheim Colony in Paraguay to celebrate the Mennonite colony's 75th anniversary. Dyck and his wife, Elfrieda, helped settle thousands of Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union in Paraguay after World War II. He is pictured with Susie and Ernst Friesen (right) and a guide (left) in front of the Fernheim Colony Cooperative.

"I found it highly gratifying to shake hands and sometimes embrace so many people who remembered Elfrieda and me from the four ships that brought over 5,000 of them to Paraguay," says Dyck. "I also met numerous former Mennonite Central Committee exchange visitors and was privileged to speak in three colonies and in Asunción.

"Reminiscing about the past was particularly enjoyable in the context of the settlers' success and spiritual maturity, which was so clearly evident. I join them and the Fernheim celebration in praising God for his wonderful leading and the assurance of his presence as they begin a new chapter."—*MCC*

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CALENDAR

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Mediation Skills Training Institute"***, Oct. 3-7, Denver, Colo. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office, 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Leadership and Anxiety in Church: A Family Systems Perspective"***, Oct. 13, Stillwater, Minn. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office, 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations"***, Oct. 14-15, Rock Island, Ill. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office, 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, ***"Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation,"*** Oct. 18-20, Raleigh, N.C. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office, 630-627-0507.

From now through November, **Sunnyside Mennonite Church**, Lancaster, Pa., is celebrating ***75 years in mission***, 1930-2005. Anyone who served at Sunnyside at any time is invited to join the congregation for any 9:30 am Sunday worship service and also view the display of photos and memorabilia set up in the church lobby. The congregation welcomes written reflections of past experiences at Sunnyside. They can be mailed to Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Box 10041, Lancaster, PA 17605-0041. Phone: 717-397-7344.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Buller, Derek Craig, July 8, to Lonnie and Maris Sawyer Buller, Ashland, Neb.

Burkholder, Caleb Brian, July 14, to Brian and Rachael Janzen Burkholder, Goessel, Kan.

Carpenter, Cadance Cordelle, July 24, to Cody and Sara Schulz Carpenter, Anchorage, Alaska.

Diener, Naomi Elise Moyer, May 17, to David and Joanna Moyer-Diener, McAllen, Texas.

Dooley, Owen Mark, July 29, to Scott Dooley and Lisa Pankratz, Springfield, Ohio.

Frey, Anya Ruth, July 17, to Jerel and Leah Everett Frey, Lancaster, Pa.

Hanus, Taelyn Lily, July 22, to Jeramy and Staci Friesen Hanus, Lincoln, Neb.

Hershberger, Simon Matthew, Aug. 1, to Marc and Jennifer Kuhns Hershberger, Lansdale, Pa.

Hofstetter, Jarrett Reagan, May 4, to Kevin and Janelle Wengerd Hofstetter, Kidron, Ohio.

Houseal, Isaac Jairus, Aug. 3, to Samuel and Wendy Rice Houseal, China.

Kratzer, Moses Allen, April 7, to Amos and Amy Chupp Kratzer, Goshen, Ind.

Martin, Rosaleigh Joy, July 1, to Matt Martin and Tiffany Brown, Hartville, Ohio.

Thieszen, Nicholas Dale, July 25, to Mark and Tanya Robitaille Thieszen, Lincoln, Neb.

Yoder, Joryn Morena, May 27, to Carl and Jenny Evans Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Bartell/Haug: Kara Bartell, Hesston, Kan., and Russ Haug, Jetmore, Kan., July 23 at Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Christner/Rice: Teresa Christner, Harrisonburg, Va., and Sheldon Rice, Harrisonburg, July 16 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Detweiler/Friesen: Kyle Detweiler and Amanda Friesen, Goshen, Ind., July 16 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Hoover/Miller: Mike Hoover, Akron, Ohio, and Cathy Miller, Akron, July 9 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kauffman/Richer: Andrew Kauffman, Goshen, Ind., and Stephanie Richer, West Unity, Ohio, July 23 at the home of the bride's parents, West Unity.

Kempf/Kratzer: Brian Kempf, Lincoln, Neb., and Jenna Kratzer, Dalton, Ohio, July 23 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Paulovich/Stoltzfus: Jon Paulovich and Gretchen Stoltzfus, Goshen, Ind., June 11 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Schrock/Zehr: Steven C. Schrock, Goshen, Ind., and Darla Zehr, July 2 at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Wagler/Yates: Eli Wagler, Archbold, Ohio, and Jackelyn Yates, Lima, Ohio, July 30 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

DEATHS

Bender, Gladys Ellen King, 94, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 1. Spouse: Cleason J. Bender (deceased). Parents: Ben B. and Melinda Mann King. Children: Robert M., Charles F.; four grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 21 in Strite Auditorium at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, Harrisonburg.

Buhr, Gerhard "George" R., 86, North Newton, Kan., died July 24. Spouse: Mildred Waltner Buhr (deceased). Parents: Peter P. and Marie Neufeld Buhr. Children: John, Bruce, Paul; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 25 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

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•Editor@TheMennonite.org

•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St.,
Goshen, IN 46526-4794

Detweiler, Edna G., 80, Souderton, Pa., died June 4 of sepsis. Parents: Edward and Mary Gross Detweiler. Funeral: June 7 at Souderton Mennonite Home.

Diener, Christian, 90, Hydro, Okla., died June 6 due to complications from diabetes. Parents: Arthur D. and Katie Diener. Funeral: June 10 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Canton, Kan.

DiRocco, James, 89, Quakertown, Pa., died May 16. Spouse: Bertha Mood DiRocco (deceased). Parents: Antonio and Giocoonta Puliti DiRocco. Children: Denise Covelens, Gloria Smith, Joseph, James; 15 grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: May 19 at Rocky Ridge Mennonite Church, Quakertown.

Gerber, Bonnie Payne, 92, Waynesboro, Va., died July 18. Spouse: Irvin Gerber (deceased). Parents: James and Maggie Mashburn Payne. Children: Daniel, David, Carolyn Martin, Rosemary King, Barbara Tapping, Nancy Ross, Bonnie Lou Bennett; 18 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 25 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Heiser, Don, 79, New Paris, Ind., died July 20 of a heart attack. Spouse: Betty Zehr Heiser. Parents: Roy and Pearl Schertz Heiser. Children: Debra Yoder, Anita Hartzler, Dennis, Jeryl; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: July 23 at Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Janzen, Susana (Susie) Penner, 98, Mountain Lake, Minn., died July 29. Spouse: Henry J. Janzen (deceased). Parents: David G. and Elisabeth Dueck Penner. Children: David, Ben, Ted, Carl, Daniel; 12 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; 20 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Kratz, Mary Jane, 57, Telford, Pa., died July 22. Spouse: Floyd H. Kratz. Parents: Aldus N. and Erma Souder Halteman. Children: Scott, Brenda Bechler; two grandchildren. Funeral: July 26 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Lehman, Pearl, 88, Orrville, Ohio, died July 22 following a brief illness. Spouse: Ezra Lehman (deceased). Parents: Peter and Lydia Steiner Geiser. Step-children: J.E., M. David, Pearl Taylor, Mabel Warfel, Gloria Kauffman; 15 step-grandchildren; 20 step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 25 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Loewen, Willmar, 90, Mountain Lake, Minn., died July 13. Spouse: Helen G. Klassen (deceased). Parents: Nic F. and Katie Dick Loewen. Children: Kenneth, Elva; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: July 18 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Martin, Berniece, 94, Wakarusa, Ind., died July 12. Spouse: George E. Martin (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Mary Sheets Weldy. Children: Mary Woodard, Ruth Yoder, Earl; nine grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 15 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Martin, Menno S., 94, Chateau Gardens, Elmira, Ont., died July 31. Spouse: Elvina Martin (deceased). Parents: Ezra and Judith Sauder Martin. Children: Lena Roth, Verna Loewen; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Albert, 85, Palmer Lake, Colo., died July 13. Spouse: Barbara Hochestetler Miller. Children: Brenda Smith, Rae Shellenberger, Alan, Lynn Gehrig; 11 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 19 at Mountain Community Mennonite Church, Palmer Lake.

Miller, Ralph E., 95, Springs, Pa., died July 21 of a stroke. Spouse: Ida Yoder Miller (deceased). Parents: Norman and Susie Hershberger Miller. Children: Stanley, Jane Benson, Lois Hepler, Linda Mullennex; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 26 at Springs Mennonite Church.

Norquest, Wilbur, 87, Henderson, Neb., died Aug. 2. Spouse: Justina Friesen Norquest. Parents: Christopher C. and Ida Pearson Norquest. Funeral: Aug. 4 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Rohrer, Maynard, 82, Phoenix, Ariz., died July 14 of Alzheimer's. Spouse: Awilda Rohrer. Parents: Clayton Rohrer and Martha Knopp. Children: Kathy Basbagill, Shari Zwick, Evie Watts; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 5 at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix.

Scheufler, Sarah Miller, 85, Winesburg, Ohio, died June 26. Spouse: (1st) John S. Hershberger (deceased), (2nd) Delmer Scheufler (deceased). Parents: Ben and Anna Sommers Miller. Children: Betty White, Paul E. Hershberger, Carol Scheufler Weyandt, Darlene Scheufler Edinger, Clyde, Garry; 18 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 30 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg.

Selzer, Wilbur, 87, Canton, Kan., died Feb. 26. Spouse: Lizzie Mae Yoder Selzer (deceased). Parents: Edward and Lorena Selzer. Children: John, Marilyn Mohler, Harold, Steven, Ben, Myron, Eldon; nine grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: March 2 at Spring Valley Mennonite Church, Canton.

Slabaugh, Paul T., 95, Goshen, Ind., died June 3. Spouse: Grace Martin Slabaugh. Parents: John and Ella Eash Slabaugh. Children: Jane Garber, Phil, Steve, Don; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: June 6 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Stoltzfus, John Reuben, 32, Charlottesville, Va., died July 12 in an automobile accident. Spouse: Rosemary Shenk. Parents: Alan and Anne Hess Stoltzfus. Children: Christian, Andrew, Daniel, Jacob. Funeral: July 24 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Tshobo, Alexis P., 23, Sellersville, Pa., died May 30 in an automobile accident. Parents: Charles and Charlotte Bindele Tshobo. Funeral: June 12 at Rocky Ridge Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Ulrich, Erma M., 80, Eureka, Ill., died July 13. Spouse: John A. Ulrich (deceased). Parents: Edward and Martha Zoss Hostetler. Children: Arlene Roemersberger, Mary Kay Blosser; six grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Metamora (Ill.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Wayne W., 65, Berlin, Ohio, died March 2 of cancer. Spouse: Mary Gerber Yoder. Parents: Wes and Mary Weaver Yoder. Children: Dean, Yvonne, Sheree Barkley; two grandchildren. Funeral: March 5 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

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Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is seeking a ***full-time conference minister***. The conference minister gives overall leadership and direction to the mission, ministry and well-being of MC Sask with particular focus for pastors and congregations. Qualifications include an understanding of and commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist theology and a preference for education and training in a Mennonite-Anabaptist institution, significant pastoral experience within the Mennonite Church, well-developed listening and communication skills, ability to relate to theological diversity and demonstrated administration and organizing skills. The successful candidate will exemplify boldness and creativity in implementing and building on the vision set by the conference. Willingness to travel throughout the province is a necessity. A detailed job description is available on the Web site www.mcsask.ca. For more information and to apply, contact Henry Block, Search Committee, 3214 Milton Str., Saskatoon SK S7L 3X4; 306-933-4660 (day), 683-0524 (evening); email h.gblock@sasktel.net. The appointment will commence mid-February 2006. Applications will be considered until Sept. 30.

Plan to share your time and talents through the creative ***short-term service program*** called **SOOP** (Service Opportunities for Older People). For information and guidance for the 70-plus service locations in the states and Canada, call MARP's toll-free number: 866-721-7730 or write: MARP, 771 Route 113, Souderton PA 18964. (Mennonite Association of Retired Persons assists Mennonite Mission Network and MCC Canada in administering SOOP.)

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Penn View Christian School is seeking an enthusiastic ***full-time director of advancement*** beginning in December 2005. Responsibilities include organizing a comprehensive development program, coordinating public relations activities, marketing, overseeing all fund-raising events and building relationships with constituents, churches, alumni and donors. Ideal candidates will have five years of experience and a bachelor's degree in a related field of study. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for 660 students in preschool through eighth grade. Please send your resumé to Robert Rutt, Executive Director, Penn View Christian School, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964. Phone 215-723-1196; email to brutt@pennview.org.

Having served a distinguished 10-year tenure as president of **Bluffton University**, Dr. Lee Snyder has indicated her desire to retire, effective June 30, 2006. Bluffton University is inviting nominations and/or applications for the position of ***president***, expected to assume office on July 1, 2006. Bluffton University is a fully accredited four-year, liberal arts university, affiliated with Mennonite Church USA and located in Bluffton, Ohio, with a student body of approximately 1,200. The university offers academic study in 39 majors and more than 30 minors, an adult degree completion program, and master's degrees in education, organizational management and business administration. Additional information about Bluffton University is available at www.bluffton.edu.

Desired leadership qualities for president include: the ability to communicate Bluffton's mission, vision and uniqueness to diverse audiences; respected and known in the Mennonite Church; committed to Anabaptist faith, identity, values and mission, but open to other faith traditions; a commitment to the liberal arts, academic excellence and the qualities of good teaching, but also committed to faculty research, writing, performances, and professional development; a gifted administrator with the ability and willingness to empower staff through delegation within a system of accountability; able to administer and manage fiscal resources; effective in fund-raising and willing to devote significant time and energy to securing financial resources; innovative, creative and able to continue the university's growth with pragmatic planning; a "people person" comfortable in interacting with the campus and all constituent groups.

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Nominations and/or letters of application with resumé may be submitted by email to presidentsearch@bluffton.edu or sent to Presidential Search Committee, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, Ohio 45817-2104.

"Cultivating a Culture of Calling: Mennonite Perspectives on Vocation," a conference hosted by **Goshen College** Oct. 20-22, 2005. Plenary speakers Michael G. Cartwright, Keith Graber Miller, Keith Harder and Diane Zaerr Brenneman. More than 30 concurrent sessions by and for pastors, administrators, teachers, students and lay leaders. For more information and to register, see www.goshen.edu/cultureofcalling or call Megan Bonham at 574-535-7547. Registration deadline is Oct. 1.

For sale: ***Church benches***, solid oak, 15 feet long, 22 plus several smaller ones. Available the end of 2005. Slate Hill Mennonite Church. Contact John W. Eby, 14 S. Seasons Drive, Dillsburg, PA 17019, 717-432-7072 or jandjeby14@aol.com.

Advent worship planner workshop: Join Marlene Kropf and Karmen Krahn for a day-long workshop focused on worship planning for Advent, Oct. 4, 2005, at **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary**, Elkhart, Ind. The event will explore Advent worship materials in *Leader* and more. Contact Beverley Sawatzky at AMBS, 574-296-6207, or bsawatzky@ambs.edu. See more at www.ambs.edu; select Church Leadership Center, then Continuing Education, then Advent Planner.

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Goshen College seeks a ***full-time Web designer/coordinator***. For more details and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page www.goshen.edu/employment.

Conference minister for new **Mountain States Mennonite Conference**: 22 churches in Colorado, New Mexico and N. Texas. Position available Jan. 1, 2005, one FTE to 1) provide overall conference leadership, 2) facilitate care for pastors and other leaders, 3) tend to corporate spiritual formation of conference, and 4) encourage passion driven ministries. Candidate will have a minimum of five years experience in an Anabaptist congregation, Anabaptist theology promoting evangelism, peacemaking and service, an ability to lead others toward visionary results, a commitment to disciplines of spiritual formation personally and within the conference and a desire to promote Spirit-driven ministries with a sensitivity to expanding multiethnic outreach, and completion of the Ministerial Leadership Information form from Mennonite Church USA. For more information, send inquiries by Oct. 1, 2005, to Don Rheinheimer at don@emcmc.org 719-481-3155, P.O. Box 502, Palmer Lake, CO 80133.

Mennonites and Political Power is a newly released video produced by **Richard Hostetler** of Goshen, Ind. Five Mennonites holding political office appear in the video. For information contact Richard at rhhost@maplenet.net.

Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks full-time ***discipleship ministries (DM) department manager*** to oversee DM finances, policies, procedures and medical coverage. Required: strong administrative/organizational skills, ability to manage finances/budgets, computer skills and short-term missions experience. Begins early to mid-October. Contact Jeanette Hess at 717-898-2251 or jeanetteh@emm.org by Aug. 31.

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January 23, 2006

Pastoring in the Context of Sexual Abuse
Presenter: Carolyn Holderread Heggen, Ph.D.
June 2006 *(Date to be announced)*

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Half-time pastor needed at **Light of Life Mennonite Church**, Farmington, N.M., in a cross-cultural congregation of two-thirds Native American and one-third Caucasian. Small congregation located near mountains and desert canyons. Contact conference ministers, Ed and Katherine Rempel, 303-347-9266, or committee chair, Arnold Miller, 505-564-3266.

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Holy Rood Mennonite Church, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is seeking a ***full-time senior pastor and possibly a half-time associate pastor***. Consideration will also be given to hiring a pastor couple where the spouse would serve as the associate pastor. Tentative starting date is Jan. 1, 2006. We are members of Mennonite Church Alberta and Mennonite Church Canada. Average attendance is 80-100 in a congregation diverse in cultures, ages and walks in life. See www.holyroodmennonite.ca for further information about the congregation. Interested applicants please contact our Alberta Conference minister, Jim Shantz, at 780-485-2518 and Guenther Toews, Chair of Pastoral Search Committee at 780-458-9358.

Part-time conference minister for **NY Mennonite Conference** beginning October 2006. Conference profile available: http://nymennon.bfn.org/. MLI required. Contact Philip Martin amcpastor@highstream.net, 716-937-0412. Applications accepted through October 2005.

Mennonite Central Committee is recruiting for the position of ***MCC liaison to the United Nations in New York***. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position. The liaison's assignment is to foster a Christian pacifist vision in the conduct of international affairs at the UN, interpret MCC to the UN and advocate relevant policies on behalf of MCC.

Significant experience outside North America and Europe or other highly industrialized areas of the world is important. Training in international relations, law or theology is preferred. Self-motivation and skill in cross-cultural communication are required. Relating to UN diplomats, hosting MCC workers, overseeing the work of office interns and maintaining regular contact with MCC offices defines the routine work of the MCC UN Liaison Office in New York. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically under-represented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply.

Contact Prem Dick for a copy of the job description and send a letter of intent and a resumé by email to psd@mcc.org or by fax at 717-859-2171 by Sept. 1, 2005. The position is scheduled to begin Dec. 1, 2005.

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RESOURCES

Simply in Season: Recipes That Celebrate the Rhythm of the Land by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert (Herald Press, 2005, $13.99) explores how the food we put on our tables impacts our local and global neighbors.

Pathways to Portage: Aurora Mennonite Church 1905-2005: A Century of People of Purpose in Portage County by Elmer S. Yoder (2005, $25) is a centennial history of Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church. To order write Don and Pauline Yoder, 9511 Lido Lane, Streetsboro, OH 44241.

Walker in the Fog: On Mennonite Writing by Jeff Gundy (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2005, $22.95) is the first book-length treatment of the flowering of American Mennonite writing of the last two decades.

On the Cross: Devotional Poems by Dallas Wiebe (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2005, $12.95) present poems on the cross, augmented by John Leon's line drawings based on crosses created by Paul Friesen.

I Saw God Dancing: Poems by Cheryl Denise (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2005, $12.95) covers subjects ranging from sheep and farming to lusts and longings, biblical women, legs, old lovers and laundromats.

Evening Chore: Poems by Shari Wagner (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2005, $12.95) takes readers to that borderland where at dusk the known meets the unknown, where details are at once familiar and mysterious, where "a kill-deer, plain-collared plover of open fields" circles above us, "with the pull of ocean in its flight."

Mennonite Central Committee's Workbook 2004-05 is available on CD. Contact mailbox@mcc.org or go to www.mcc.org.

History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition Through History by Rodney James Sawatsky (Pandora Press, 2005, $21) traces the ways Mennonites in North America defined themselves through the writing of history, from the colonial era through the mid-20th century. To order go to www.pandorapress.com.

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Raising 'athletes of Christ'

Gordon Houser

One of the most challenging and least recognized roles in our consumerist culture is that of a Christian parent trying to raise what early church father John Chrysostom called "athletes of Christ" in a society where children are seen primarily as a market for selling products.

Keeping Christian values alive among our children can be an uphill battle in the face of media that promote other values. David Batstone writes (www.sojo.net): "Studies show that children spend on average 4.5 hours a day in front of televisions, video games and computers." He then quotes David Walsh, author of *Selling Out America's Children: How America Puts Profits before Values and What Parents Can Do*, who identifies "six key values that dominate mass media:

1. Happiness is found in having things.
2. Get all you can for yourself.
3. Get it all as quickly as you can.
4. Win at all costs.
5. Violence is entertaining.
6. Always seek pleasure and avoid boredom."

Another element of concern for parents is that of frightening shows. Joanne Cantor in her book *"Mommy, I'm Scared": How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them* (Harcourt Brace, 1998, $13) writes "for parents who feel that getting rid of their television is not the best option but who want to protect their children from preventable psychological harm."

Because TVs often have so many programs that are only a click away, many children are watching shows or movies meant for adults. More than half of kindergarteners have seen R-rated movies.

One key step for parents is to provide some monitoring function. Cantor uses concepts from developmental psychology to help parents predict the kind of material likely to scare their children. She also offers guidance in calming children's fears and advice on how best to shield children from traumatic content.

Another step is to watch certain shows with one's children or play certain games with them and talk about the values such media teach. Most children actually value their parents' views more than any others. But too few parents make those views clear—or else their values are not worth emulating.

One resource Batstone mentions is *Boomerang!*, a 70-minute CD in the format of a magazine that comes out monthly. It has been heralded by the American Library Association, won the Parent's Choice Award.

Raising "athletes of Christ" is a daunting yet important task. Parents need all the help they can get. TM

FILMS

Dear Frankie (PG-13) is a Scottish film in which a mother fleeing her abusive husband passes off letters she's written to her 9-year-old deaf son as if from his father, a sailor at sea. When the ship she has made up is due at the coastal town where they live, she hires a man to pose as the boy's father. What happens next touches on father-son love and forgiveness. Lovely.

Howl's Moving Castle (PG) is an imaginative, romantic, antiwar, animated film by the Japanese director who made the wonderful film *Spirited Away*. This one isn't as good, but it is also told from a girl's point of view and offers a positive outlook on old age.

The March of the Penguins (G) is an amazing documentary about emperor penguins in Antarctica that make 70-mile treks to mate and raise their young in a harsh climate.

DVDS

In My Country (R) shows the importance and pain of truthtelling through the eyes of two journalists covering South Africa's truth and reconciliation process in 1994. Each learns about walking in the other's shoes.

Undertow (R) is an artistic achievement by the director of *George Washington*. A boy saves his younger brother and learns to free himself from the ravages of greed.

BOOKS

Sacred and Secular Scriptures: A Catholic Approach to Literature by Nicholas Boyle (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005, $22.50) looks at the Bible as literature and literature as Bible. He writes, "Literature is language free of instrumental purpose, and it seeks to tell the truth." In its secular form it uses words to give pleasure and so enables us to enjoy what is. In its sacred form it uses words "to utter obligation, and so [gives] us our identity, not as beings who perform a function but as creatures who know what ought to be." This is a slow read but worth the effort, full of insights.

The Truce of God by Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2005, $15) is a new edition relevant to the wars of today. Williams combines theological acuity and clear writing. Among his many insights is this: "There is a miserable link between militarized politics, consumer society, the corruption and decline of the arts and the cheapening and trivializing of language—in politics, journalism, advertising and worship." This small book is packed with wisdom.

CDS

Can't Keep Quiet is a CD ($14.99) for children from Bryan Moyer Suderman, who played in the worship band at Charlotte 2005. He played two of these songs there. Go to www.smalltallmusic.com or www.heraldpress.com.

From our readers

Proverbs: Believers Church Bible Commentary by John W. Miller (Herald Press, 2005, $24.99) Miller explains that to appreciate the original meaning of Proverbs—without disregarding its application to all who read it—the book should be understood as a manual for young men while including advice about loving one's wife, creating a home that honors her and other such women-affirming material. He does not leave the reader engulfed in a sea of words of enlightenment but builds a bridge between spiritual truth and everyday practical advice. He addresses the problem of absent or uninvolved fathers and the increased number of young people living together outside marriage. He discusses law enforcement and the United Nations. This practical handbook guides us through the wise sayings of Proverbs—not too technically yet not too succinctly—but with the creative scholarship of one of our Mennonite sages.—*Tim Schultz, Clarence, N.Y.*

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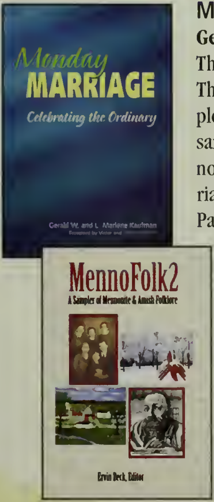
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Ervin Beck, Editor

Monday Marriage: Celebrating the Ordinary

Gerald W. and L. Marlene Kaufman

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Paper, 150 pages, $9.99; in Canada $12.49

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Everett J. Thomas

Ishmael of Bulawayo

My name is Ishmael. I am in grade 5. The pastors have arranged for us to go to Nkanyezi Primary School.—Ishmael, staying at Lobhengula Church with his grandmother

Ishmael is one of many Zimbabwe residents displaced by the destruction of homes and businesses as part of what the government is calling Operation Murambatsvina ("Restore Order/Clean Up"). Mennonite World Conference estimates conservatively that 250,000 people have been displaced since late May. A recent U.S. wire service estimated the number at more than 750,000.

The plight of these people could blur into stories of other problems around the world—except for one reason. The global Anabaptist family has a personal connection to Ishmael and this story: Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, was the site of our 2003 Mennonite World Conference gathering.

In a recent letter to national churches and members around the world, Mennonite World Conference leaders reminded us all of the "special bond [that] was established between the international guests who participated in the world assembly and their Zimbabwean BIC hosts. It was a bond that declared, 'We will not forget you.'"

People and all their belongings were packed like junk. It seems the crime they committed is that they are poor.—MWC release

Ishmael is one of those we promised not to forget. His words were passed along in a report from church leaders in Bulawayo. The stories are heartbreaking and call us to keep our promise.

"The churches in Bulawayo were allowed to shelter internally displaced people," said the report. "On the 20th of July at about 9:30 p.m., the police forced themselves into a number of churches where these people had been kept. The churches had made plans to move them all to the rural areas. In spite of all the arrangements and agreements [with government officials] ... the police went on to commandeer them into open trucks. Included in these people were the sick—some on medication—the elderly, women and little children. Children who were already asleep [in the churches] were woken up by the police and frog-marched into the open trucks. People ... and all their belongings were packed like junk. This was the story in all the churches where they picked up the people throughout the city. This operation was undertaken under the cover of darkness between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. These people are not criminals but bona fide members of this nation. It seems the crime they committed is that they are poor. ... Four people died, some are traumatized while others are now insane because of the situation."

So how do we keep our promise to our sisters and brothers in Zimbabwe who are part of the global Anabaptist family? Church leaders in Bulawayo ask us to pray

- that the church in Zimbabwe will remain faithful and strong in advocating for truth and justice at all levels,
- for victims of ongoing home demolitions,
- for churches that are providing temporary shelter and advocating for permanent homes for victims,
- that political leaders might "be struck by the fear of the Lord" as they consider legislation that may adversely affect schools like Ishmael's,
- that these leaders would make wise economic decisions,
- for an end to the four-year drought that has made people vulnerable to manipulation as they seek to feed their families,
- for weary pastors who spend most of their time comforting victims of HIV/AIDS and their families and burying the dead,
- for peace to prevail.

Some of us may wonder if our prayers are enough. But in Africa, prayer is valued more highly than it often is among us, and prayer is what our sisters and brothers in Zimbabwe are requesting. We pray for all the Ishmaels whose plights are similar to the original Ishmael in Genesis 16—fated to wander the earth without family, community or a home. Since the days of Genesis—and throughout hisotry—home, community and stability are needs basic to the human experience. Those working to provide such basics for displaced victims in Zimbabwe ask only one thing of us: pray.—*ejt*

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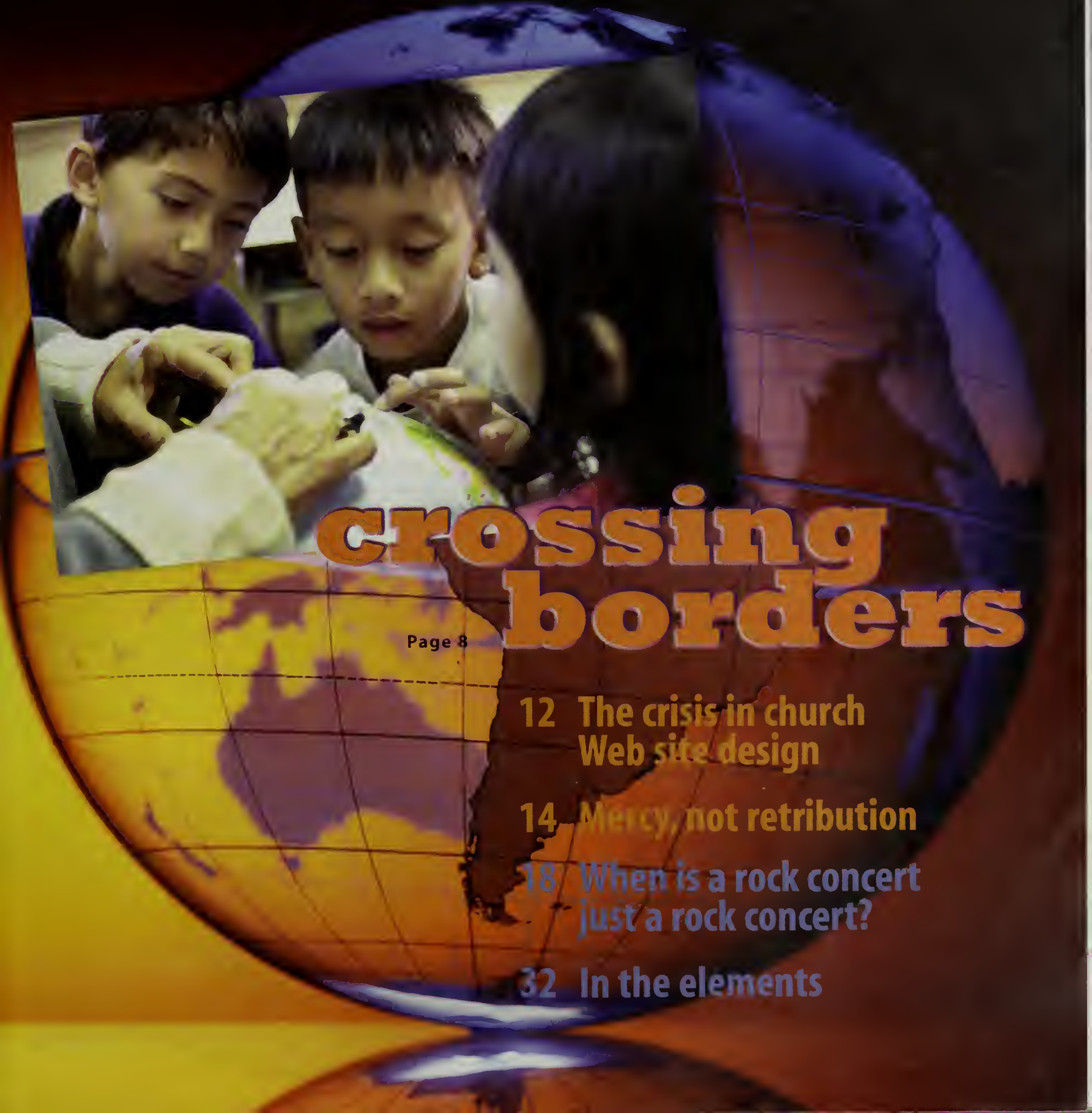
September 6, 2005



crossing borders

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Jesus, the only hope in the storm

Elaine Bryant is pastor of Englewood Mennonite Church in Chicago.

There are times for individuals, families, communities (faith and geographic) and nations when the focus needs to be narrowed. This narrowing may be necessary in some cases for survival. In other cases it is necessary for continuance of life, as it is known. For the ancient Israelites the failure to focus on and follow God's instructions led to 40 years of wandering. Later the people of Israel again ignored the prophetic calls for focus and follow-through on God's instruction and were exiled from the land. For the leaders and people of Jerusalem at the time of the ministry of Jesus, the failure to focus and accept his message and offer of peace led to Jerusalem's destruction and another time of exile from the land.

The current casting off of personal or social moral values on the left and right, respectively, mirrors the time when Jesus lived and was crucified, as well as the times of the pre-exile prophets. The biblical examples of consequences for failure to heed prophetic warnings point to the possibility that life- and well-being-threatening consequences could continue and escalate.

In light of the claims of the Bible—especially the Gospels and the prophetic words about the Lord Jesus being the One to hear and heed—there needs to be a narrowing or increase of focus on the Lord Jesus and his words. According to Matthew 7:24-25, the Lord himself said, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock."

The enemy has come into our time in history like a flood.

Brothers and sisters, these are stormy times, indeed. The enemy has come into our time in history like a flood. Consider events and manifestations such as Sept. 11, 2001, urban and worldwide violence with disregard for the sanctity life, as well as increased polarization and division in the church of Jesus Christ—even the peace churches. However, there is hope and good news from on high.

In Isaiah 59:19 it is written, "For he will come like a pent-up stream that the wind of the Lord drives on." In Matthew 17:5 and Mark 9:7 it is indicated that God spoke and said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well please; listen to him!"

In light of the above, isn't it reasonable to say that the Lord Jesus and his words make up the standard that needs to be lifted up by the Spirit of the Lord through those who call him Lord? Isn't it also reasonable to say that two commands or sayings from him are keys for moving effectively toward justice with shalom and de-escalation of verbal and physical violence in the church and beyond? Those sayings are the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) and the "new commandment" of John 13:34. Verbalization, attitudes and deeds inside and outside the church need to reflect those two commands from the Lord.

Tom Beutel, chair of the peace and justice committee of Gilead Mennonite Church in Chesterville, Ohio, wrote thoughts like those above in an Aug. 16 article in *Peace Signs*: "This idea of 'beginning in the church' has been growing on me for some time. ... The world is a mess. Humanity is fallen, broken, [and] in need of redemption. But in many ways, so is the church! ... we must strive, [as] led by the Spirit, to obey everything" the Lord has commanded. "By doing so, God will be glorified and our witness will have integrity."

If ever there was a time for more intentionality about narrowing the focus to Jesus and following through on his words, this is it. Words from a song by Fernando Ortega give the reason: "Jesus! ... The only hope in the storm."

TheMennonite

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In the elements—*Gordon Houser*

This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Speaking to government

I agree with John D. Roth ("A Deep Pastoral Concern," Aug. 9) that we as the church have allowed politics to drive us into division. I also agree with J. Daryl Byler ("Why Mennonite Church USA Should Speak to Government," Aug. 9) that we need to be a voice for those who have no choice. However, for a people who like to herald a third way, I fail to see a third way reflected in either of these proposals for political involvement.

I propose a third way of relating to political issues. Why don't we as Mennonites sign a letter of petition to Osama Bin Laden, Al Qaeda, Zarqawi and anyone else who our country labels as enemies. This letter would express our desire to not view them as enemies, let them know of our prayers for them and seek to open a dialogue to understand more clearly their hatred toward us.

This would be a step of faith with risks as we would have no idea of the outcomes. As a people who believe we are called to love our enemies and be ministers of reconciliation, can't we agree that this is what we're called to do, regardless of whether we're political or apolitical?—*David Powell, Waynesboro, Va.*

Two major perspectives—as typified by J. Daryl Byler (prophetic) and John D. Roth (pastoral) in the Aug. 9 issue—can leave the impression that individual members of Mennonite Church USA should ascribe to one course of action or the other. Both perspectives use similar language: Mennonites should … (fill in point of view). It's as if the church is trying to decide if it should be primarily prophetic or pastoral. I don't believe this can happen. If our current emphasis on being missional is at all successful, we will continue to welcome into our congregations members who have diverse callings as to what constitutes faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

If the current discussion continues as is, some who have been gifted with a potent sense of urgency to be actively involved in larger peace and justice issues may rightly feel frustrated and squelched by a churchwide call for a moratorium on political affiliations. Others—with valid pastoral concerns and a more local awareness—may feel pressured and intimidated by the sheer loftiness and moral power of a churchwide call to prophetic statements and actions. What if the church could frame these discussions along the lines of "Mennonites may or can … (fill in perspective)," rather than "should"? Both prophetic and pastoral gifts are from God and are needed among us and through us to the world.—*Randy Good, Taftsville, Vt.*

I agree with J. Daryl Byler that Mennonites should speak to government. I am uneasy with John Roth's proposal of a five-year sabbatical from politics. I respect Roth and his concern about the deep political divisions within the church, but if unity is bought at the expense of silencing prophetic voices, that is too high a price.

Many in the United States are rightly disturbed at the relative silence of Islamic clerics in the face of suicide bombings by fellow Islamists. But as Christians, we should be more concerned at the silence of Christian leaders while our nation pursues its aggressive, militaristic agenda. Our governmental leaders would love a five-year period of political silence from those Americans who believe war is not an acceptable response to terrorism. We would be failing them and ourselves if we backed off at this critical time.—*Abraham K. Gehman, Bally, Pa.*

I am troubled by John Roth's advice ("A Deep Pastoral Concern," Aug. 9) to leave politics for five years. Such a plan seems to put the interests of the church ahead of our task to preach the gospel.

When Jesus defines his ministry as bringing good news to the poor by quoting Isaiah, he is identifying with a prophetic tradition that could never be quiet in the face of governmental injustice. Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah all spoke against a government that put the interests of the rich ahead of those of the poor. In a time when our government slashes spending for the poor in this country (let alone its neglect of poverty in the developing world) so that it can give massive tax relief to the wealthy, the church is called to remember its age-old prophetic witness. To be silent in the face of such governmental evil is to deny the very heart of the gospel message.—*Mitchell Brown, Wilmette, Ill.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Opinions attract great attention. Annual readers' surveys tell us that the editorial and these two pages are the most-read sections. But there are other opinions in this issue as well. David Gillaspey (page 12) opines that "most church Web sites are poorly designed," and this is a problem because excellent Web sites can "draw non-Christians to churches." Alan Stucky (page 18) asks, "When is a rock concert just a rock concert?" and says, "having fun is just as important as any Sunday morning sermon." But we also have the usual opinion pages filled with provocative voices. Five Readers Say writers respond to our Aug. 9 "Speak to Government?" issue. And associate editor Gordon Houser offers an editorial opinion sparked by the drenching he received during a Charlotte 2005 peace witness. As Mennonite Church USA becomes more missional, Gordon says, "we will move into the elements, into the lives of people we may have only theorized about before."—*Editor*

John D. Roth rightly perceives the danger of our congregations becoming divided along party lines. But his proposal for a five-year moratorium on participating in elections or political parties seems both unrealistic and perhaps inappropriate. As J. Daryl Byler noted in the same issue ("Why Mennonite Church USA Should Speak to Government," Aug. 9), speaking to government is not the primary task of the church, but it is still a biblical and important task. And Everett Thomas' editorial ("Join the Party," Aug. 9) makes a strong case for political party participation.

Perhaps Roth's main concerns would be resolved if church leaders frequently said from the pulpit: "The kingdom of God does not belong to any nation or political party and so the church is no place for partisan politics. We do not endorse political parties or candidates, but we support church members who seek to pursue God's justice and peace through the political process." I would encourage congregational leaders to select appropriate political actions consistent with Mennonite faith, for the congregation to participate in, while at the same time giving all members the freedom to make their own decisions without pressure or discrimination.—*Ryan Ahlgrim, Indianapolis*

Running for Congress

I am the lead pastor at Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church in the western suburbs of Chicago. One of our members—Lindy Scott—has decided to run for Congress as a Democrat in Illinois' sixth District. This is the seat that has been held for many years by the soon-to-retire Henry Hyde. Lindy has been a member of our church for several years and is our lay minister of missions. He's a man of integrity and deeply committed to the way of Christ. As a result, he plans to run a different kind of campaign. As he says on his Web site: "My goal is to serve in the House of Representatives as Jesus himself would serve. If Jesus were in Congress, he would be just and compassionate. He would listen to people from all sides of an issue and take action that would promote the well-being of all." Recently, the *Chicago Sun-Times* wrote about him: http://www.suntimes.com/output/elect/cst-nws-cong31.html—*Todd Friesen, Lombard, Ill.*

Encouraged in Lebanon

We had to miss Charlotte 2005 this year—the first time to miss a Mennonite convention in more than a decade. So it was good to receive the July 26 issue reporting on the convention. We were sorry not to be in on the launching of the hymnal supplement. We're glad the rain didn't stop the peace walk. According to Everett Thomas' editorial, "a noisy, missional church" is doing well. That speaks hope and confidence as we represent that church through Mennonite Central Committee and its peacemaking mission here in Lebanon.—*Ken Seitz, Beirut, Lebanon*

Lift the moratorium

I agree with the letter from Donald and Elsie Steelberg (Readers Say, Aug. 9) noting that, although we were instructed by the Saskatoon ('86) and Purdue ('87) statements to remain "in loving dialogue" concerning homosexuality and the church, *The Mennonite* refuses to print articles attempting to promote such dialogue. It appears there are many readers who want their thoughts to be heard.

It's been nearly 20 years since we were given this directive. Wouldn't *The Mennonite* be an ideal forum in which such issues could be discussed, providing we all agree to participate in "loving dialogue" and not "heated debate"? By truly listening to each other, perhaps we can together discern how the church can minister to those who are different, such as siblings, parents, children, coworkers, pastors and best friends.

I suggest *The Mennonite* lift the moratorium and allow people to speak, so we can hear what they have to say. And remember, dialogue doesn't end with winners and losers—just more enlightened participants.—*Ken Roth, Harrisonburg, Va.*

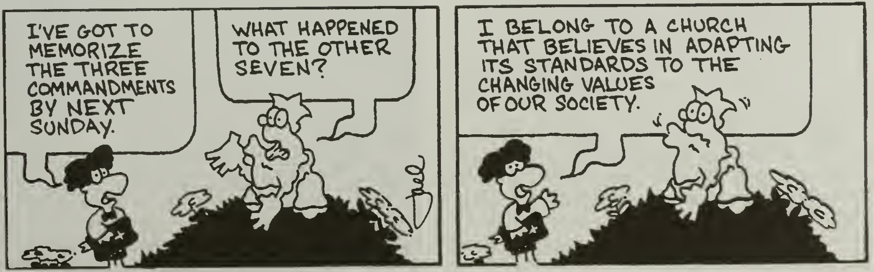
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Does your congregation have a Web site?

- ○ Yes (77%)
- ○ No, but we hope to soon (14%)
- ○ No and we don't plan to (9%)
- ○ Don't know (0%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I'VE GOT TO MEMORIZE THE THREE COMMANDMENTS BY NEXT SUNDAY.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER SEVEN?
I BELONG TO A CHURCH THAT BELIEVES IN ADAPTING ITS STANDARDS TO THE CHANGING VALUES OF OUR SOCIETY.

IN BRIEF

Marjorie Shantz, long-term mission worker, dies

Marjorie Shantz Martin, 90, died Aug. 19 of cancer in Orrville, Ohio. She was born March 9, 1915, in Freeport, Ont., to Bishop Benjamin B. and Mrya (Snyder) Shantz. She married Phares D. Martin May 2, 1970, in Orville. He died Dec. 8, 1978. She was a missionary with Mennonite Board of Missions and served in Puerto Rico from 1947 to 1970 and from Feb. 14-March 14, 1994. She served as a midwife in the mountains and, according to co-workers, was well-loved by the Puerto Rican church.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

CPT joins witness charging Alliant Techsystems with war crimes

Members of Christian Peacemaker Teams and other peace activists put Alliant Techsystems on trial for the production of depleted uranium weapons. Members of the summer training group and other CPT staff and supporters staged a mock hearing at the entrance to ATK's corporate offices in Edina, Minn. The Aug. 8 witness coincided with the 60th anniversary of the U.S. dropping of the first atomic bombs on Japan.—*CPT*

'MennObits' site available for obituaries

GOSHEN, Ind.—A research site for those interested in Amish and Mennonite families will now automatically receive obituary information when that information is submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. Sponsored by Mennonite Church USA's Historical Committee and called "MennObits," the research site already contains obituaries from *Herald of Truth* (1864-1908), *Gospel Witness* (1905-1908) and *Gospel Herald* (1908-1998). Obituaries from *The Mennonite* (1998-present) have been added as well as a few from *Mennonite Weekly Review*. A new form developed by *The Mennonite* allows more information about the deceased to be included than is currently published in "For the Record." That additional information (Part 2 of the new form) will be posted at MennObits.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Prothro named creative manager for MC USA

NEWTON, Kan.—It's not every child who refuses to say the Pledge of Allegiance because it doesn't fit with her Christian priorities as a 9-year-old. But that was only one of many times in her life that Marathana Prothro, new creative manager for Mennonite Church USA, has demonstrated a strong commitment to God and the church.

Marathana Prothro

Prothro made her most recent commitment in that direction when she joined Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership in Newton. She replaces Cindy Snider, who resigned July 29 after five years to pursue writing children's books based on such topics as peacemaking.

Prothro, former news editor for *The Newton Kansan*, began her new post as part of the communications team July 25. She will lead and coordinate the writing, graphic design, print production and media creation functions for the denomination. —*Mennonite Church USA*

Lancaster bishop leaves to start new group

LANCASTER, Pa.—A longtime bishop in Lancaster Mennonite Conference is leaving to start his own congregation and a "network" outside Mennonite Church USA.

Enos Martin, 61, of Elizabethtown, Pa., recently started New Name Christian Fellowship, which meets in a community center in Elizabethtown. The network he hopes to establish with others will be called New Testament Fellowship of Mennonite/Anabaptist Churches.

Jason Harrison

Youth witness Colombian Mennonites' faith

Youth Venture participants Christina Massey (left) and Leah Roth find joy and hope for the future while visiting the Colombia Mennonite Church. This summer, five Youth Venture participants were witness to Colombia's dichotomies of conflic and peace during a 12-day learning trip. There they found, throughout the city and further into the mountain countryside small pockets of Mennonite believers holding fast to a faith with the power to forgive.—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Martin, a psychiatrist known for his ministry to homosexuals, recovering substance abusers and prisoners, believes Mennonite Church USA represents a "toned-down" gospel that will spread to Lancaster Conference, which joined the denomination in 2004.

"I am committed to a 'militant/presence-based' vision of Christianity," Martin wrote in a statement about his decision. "I want to be part of a new wineskin where this militant gospel is front and center in our homes, our schools, our publications, our congregations and our conferences."

Martin, a 17-year member of the Lancaster bishop board, from which he retired recently, believes continued membership in Mennonite Church USA would lead to an eventual loss of this spiritual vision.

Lancaster Conference moderator Keith Weaver said he was disappointed Martin is leaving the conference and his district. "We simply wish him the Lord's blessing in his pursuit," Weaver said Aug. 17.

Weaver said Martin's leaving was not acrimonious. "The dream we have is that we can all work together instead of carving out ... infinite little pieces," he said. "I wish we could go in the other direction."—*from* Mennonite Weekly Review

MCC seeks volunteers to help Congo elections

AKRON, Pa.—Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is seeking volunteers and providing funds to help churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo do public education about democracy and mediate conflicts in advance of national elections in 2006.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is in the midst of voter registration for its first democratic elections in decades. The nation is still in disarray following the Second Congo War (1998-2002), which caused an estimated 3.8 million deaths, mostly through starvation and disease. Despite a peace agreement that officially ended the war, fighting and deprivation continue.

MCC is seeking applicants immediately for one-month positions in the capital, Kinshasa, to train mediators who will be present at voter registration and voting centers. MCC is also seeking applicants immediately for a six-month position as a conflict mediation trainer and a one-year position on a coordination team for election observers through the Church of Christ in Congo.

MCC also invites volunteers to serve as international election observers for terms of approximately 10 days when elections are scheduled in 2006.

French proficiency is required for these positions. All applicants may contact Prem Dick at psd@mcc.org or 717-859-1151.

MCC is contributing $25,000 to the Church of Christ and $12,000 to Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches to support public education about democracy.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Matthew Lester

Children sing at Kenyan Mennonite school

Students Harun Bumbe (left) and Geoffrey Matiko sing at Menno Kids Academy, a school supported by Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family program at Mathare North Mennonite Church in Nairobi, Kenya. The school serves 85 children from kindergarten to sixth grade in a low-income neighborhood where many families cannot afford school uniforms or books. MCC's Global Family program provides funds for food, teachers' stipends, supplies and school maintenance.—*MCC*

Magazine ranks Mennonite colleges

Mennonite Church USA four-year colleges and universities appeared in the annual rankings of best colleges published Aug. 22 in *U.S. News & World Report.*

Goshen (Ind.) College and Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., both ranked nationally in the Best Liberal Arts Colleges category. Goshen ranked in the third tier of the category for the fifth straight year, while EMU ranked in the fourth tier.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Bluffton (Ohio) University attained top-tier placements in the category of Midwestern Comprehensive Colleges offering bachelor's degrees. Bethel ranked 29th and Bluffton 34th out of 54 colleges in the top tier.—*Mennonite Weekly Review*

Hispanic degree program ends

GOSHEN, Ind.—Mennonite Education Agency, with the General Board of Iglesia Menonita Hispana (IMH or Hispanic Mennonite Church), has announced that the four-year Hispanic Education in Theology and Leadership (HETL) degree program, housed at Goshen College, has ended.

The end of the program is in part due to an unsustainable level of enrollment, yet also prepares for continuing a process of envisioning the next phase for leadership training with IMH's Comisión de Educación in partnership with MEA, which is committed to identifying and providing for the education needs of people throughout the church, including people of diverse racial/ethnic groups.

"This program in leadership training was created for a particular need at a particular time in the church's history," says Juan Montes, IMH executive director. "As we look to the future, leadership training remains key, and we are looking at new ways of meeting that need in today's context."
—*Mennonite Education Agency*

Historic Hebrew scroll loaned to Hesston

HESSTON, Kan.—A historic Hebrew scroll more than 300 years old has been loaned to Hesston College by Melvin and Vivian Eyster of Thomas, Okla. The ancient scroll scribed in a Jewish scriptorium in the mid-to-late 17th century by Moroccan Jews has been appraised at $92,500. It will be on display in Smith Center for special occasions.

The manuscript is in Hebrew, on sheepskins that are sewn and scrolled on two wooden rollers. It is approximately 23 inches tall, 92 feet long and weighs some 40 pounds. The scroll contains the Torah, or Pentateuch, the first five books of the Jewish Bible and the Christian Old Testament.
—*Hesston College*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Mason appointed Menno Haven CEO

Rodney Mason has been appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Menno Haven Retirement Communities in Franklin County, Pa. Since 1995, Mason has served as president of the Peter Becker Retirement Community in Harleysville, Pa. Menno Haven serves about 1,100 residents and employs about 500 employees.—*Menno Haven*

U.S. obesity rate climbs higher

Americans continued to gain weight last year as the adult obesity rate inched up to 24.5 percent from 23.7 percent in 2003, a new report says. The new report made numerous recommendations, challenging individuals and families to make even small changes in diet and physical activity and urging communities to offer free or low-cost fitness programs and provide healthy food at community events.—*Wichita Eagle*

crossing borders

Stories of crossing spiritual, economic, linguistic, cultural and national borders

by Lisa Weaver

Jesus walked into the land of Samaria and shared words and water with a woman at a well (John 4). Though a simple exchange, this revolutionary act shattered a host of preconceived ideas about interactions between Jews and Samaritans—people who regarded each other with enmity. As detailed by Willard M. Swartley in his essay "Peace and Mission in John's Gospel," Jesus reached across a political and cultural divide as well as across the line between men and women. He did so with courage, compassion and integrity, and she responded in kind.

This "border crossing" by Jesus helps shape the lens through which I view the world. I see the example of Jesus as an invitation to cross boundaries in both religious and secular contexts. It is a calling to apply the Bible to life.

I am a fourth and fifth grade ESL teacher in a public school. ESL stands for English as a Second Language, which means the students I support speak a language other than English at home. A significant part of my job is to connect with those who have come from different places and experiences, to welcome them into my world (the world of an American school) and to cross deliberately though carefully and respectfully into their worlds. Here are stories from my 13 years of teaching that represent my own border crossings—over spiritual, economic, linguistic, cultural and national boundaries.

Green branches: Early last fall, our school's Hmong bilingual resource specialist (a linguistic and cultural liaison between families and school) invited me to go with him on a home visit. We went to the apartment of a new Hmong student whose family had just arrived from a refugee camp in Thailand. When we arrived, my colleague motioned me to stop, then pointed at two small branches with green leaves, one taped to each side of the door frame. He explained that this meant we needed to ask specific permission before entering the house; the branches with green leaves were a sign to visitors that a cleansing ceremony has been performed for someone in the apartment who was unwell. If a visitor stepped across the doorway without permission, he or she may unwittingly carry harmful spirits back inside. When our knock was answered, my colleague gestured to the branches and asked permission for both of us. We were warmly welcomed in. I was thankful for my colleague's knowledge and wisdom, and I was honored to be a guest in the home of my student.

The example of Jesus is an invitation to cross boundaries in both religious and secular contexts. It is a calling to apply the Bible to life.

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Cold feet: When the morning bell rang at 8:30, I was at my hallway post, greeting children in English (Good morning.), Spanish (Hola. Como esta?) and Hmong (Nyob zoo.). I helped with zippers and laces or gave a thumbs up for homework lifted triumphantly from the backpack. I kept a lookout for little hands that arrived without mittens in the bitterly cold Wisconsin weather, but one day, I noticed cold feet—sockless in a pair of worn-out, too-big, only partially laced hiking boots. I whispered to the little boy's teacher that I would bring him right back, then I took his hand and we walked to the nurse's office, where we kept extra clothes. I knelt in front of him, helped him slip on a pair of thick, brand-new, tube socks. Then we laced and tied his boots so they fit better. The 9-year-old eyes smiling back at mine were brown, but they looked remarkably like the 9-year-old blue eyes that smiled at me that morning at home.

As if on cue: My fifth grade reading group consisted of four students who spoke conversational English fine but who all scored well below grade level at the beginning of the year in reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. Partway through the fall, we were joined by a new Hmong student who was mostly a silent observer in the group. That day in our group, we were sharing book reports we had worked on during the previous week. I was pleased with all of them, and the students were pleased with themselves. But the crowning moment came as the final student presented his report. It was our new student, who three months earlier did not know the letters of the English alphabet and was just beginning spoken English. Yet that day he had the courage to read, in chorus with me, three simple sentences I had helped him write. What struck me most was the subconscious movement of the other children. As if on cue, they leaned forward as he spoke, their faces alert, waiting with bated breath, then erupting into spontaneous applause when he finished. These children, representing three continents and cultures, labeled "at risk" themselves, were jubilant in the triumph of the most vulnerable among them.

These children, representing three continents and cultures, labeled "at risk" themselves, were jubilant in the triumph of the most vulnerable among them.

The tables turned: I arrived at a local refugee center for an evening dinner for the new Hmong families in the area. I was the only Caucasian there. I towered over those around me, and I was conscious of how different I looked. I understood only a little of the Hmong language swirling around me. I did not know the social protocol of where to wait or what to do. I spotted one of the families from my school; their faces lit up in surprise, and I was sure mine registered gratitude. I ate supper seated between two of my students, their parents across the table from me. As the program for the evening progressed entirely in Hmong, I didn't know if we were at the beginning, middle or end of the agenda. I simply clapped when others clapped, stood when others stood, sat when others sat. I watched everything and everyone for clues as to what to do. I realized my senses had been hyper alert for two hours, and I was physically tired. I stored my reactions and emotions to bring out in days to come, for I knew this was how my students' parents often felt in America.

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May I help you? I was rounding the corner by the front office door on my way to a classroom when I noticed a man hovering around the entrance to the school, looking back and forth skittishly. I approached and asked politely, “May I help you?” He took a step back, shook his head and raised one hand in gentle protest. I tried, “Habla usted Espanol?” and relief flooded his face. He stepped forward, and we shook hands as I explained in Spanish that I was one of the English teachers there. He told me, also in Spanish, that he needed to pick up his kindergarten daughter for a doctor’s appointment. I walked with him into the office, showed him how to use the student sign-out book, then chatted with him while the secretary called his daughter’s classroom. When his little girl popped into view, it was the scene of every parent and child—he picked her up, she hugged him, happily told him what they were doing in class, and off they went. The father and I waved goodbye like old friends.

Invisible lines: The staff had invited all our ESL families to school for dinner. We had a world map and thumb tacks, and everyone marked countries of origin as they arrived—Thailand, Laos, Liberia, Ethiopia, Colombia, Peru, Honduras, Puerto Rico and Mexico. We passed out magnets with the phone numbers of our school translators and ESL teachers and explained some of the standard school systems, such as how to call in to the office when a child stayed home sick and how to sign up for after-school clubs. We thanked the parents for coming for the evening, for sharing their children with us during the day and for giving their children the gift of their home language. All evening I had in my mind the vision of lines stretching out—almost invisible yet strong, like a spider’s web—lines that went out from this school, back across oceans and continents to other places and people that I could only imagine yet were present here in people’s hearts and souls. I was awed and humbled.

With God’s grace, may we all look for and cross carefully the borders that separate us from those who walk beside us. May our eyes see ever farther and our hearts reach ever deeper.

Lisa Weaver is a member of Madison (Wis.) Mennonite Church.

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There was no time

by Steven R. Cope

There was no time
until a voice said

in the beginning,
nor was there an end.

Grass upon a seedless plain
did not grow before it had a name.

So works a word
upon a formless thing,

the unlovely and unblessed,
the child to whom is said

this is what you are:
loved, needed, longed for.

Steven R. Cope lives in Winchester, Ky.

The crisis in church
design

by David Gillaspey

Most church Web sites today are poorly designed. Primarily this is because most still use outdated Web site design techniques that were "cutting edge" only a few years ago.

I launched Great Church Websites (www.greatchurchwebsites.org) in April 2004 to find and showcase examples of well-designed church Web sites. I believe excellence in church Web site design serves the kingdom of God by helping draw non-Christians to churches. For this reason, I want every church to develop a great Web site—no church left behind, so to speak.

A great Web site is achieved not just through excellence in graphic design but also through excellence in other areas, including content, navigation and accessibility.

Finding even well-designed church Web sites turned out to be difficult, however. Since April 2004, I have been reviewing the Web sites of churches located around the United States on a state-by-state basis. To date, I have reviewed 9,000 church Web sites in a handful of states, with many states yet to go.

I discovered that most church Web sites today are poorly designed. Primarily this is because most still use outdated Web site design techniques that were "cutting edge" only a few years ago. These include such techniques as using animated gifs and tiled or patterned backgrounds. But Web site design has changed dramatically from its early days. The secular world kept up (or led the way); church Web sites, by and large, did not. Most will appear to unchurched visitors as stuck in time.

I created on my Web site a searchable "virtual gallery" of the best of the church Web sites I found in my research, as screen shots of home pages. As I reviewed more and more church Web sites, the percentage I could include in this online gallery remained remarkably stable: about 5 to 6 percent.

A similar percentage of church Web sites I reviewed were satisfactorily designed, but did not quite make the cut for the virtual gallery. Another 5 percent of church Web sites were ineligible because they used predesigned templates.

Thus I can estimate that the remainder—about 85 percent—of church Web sites are poorly designed or dated in their appearance. That's troubling to me because I believe a poorly designed or dated-looking church Web site reflects badly on a church and on the kingdom.

Terrell Sanders, writing about technology in the January issue of *Church Executive* magazine, talks about the importance of a church having a Web site. Speaking of young families (because they're a primary target for churches), he says, "If you're not on the Web, you don't exist." He adds, "A poor Web site can actually deter visits from young families."

Conversely, a well-designed and implemented church Web site has the potential to attract people to a church. Consider the words of Jon S. Trainer, pastor and teaching elder of New Hope Bible Church, New Albany, Ohio: "In the last three to four months, fully 100 percent of visitors either found our church via the Web or visited the Web before they visited the church. Our site has been an amazing tool."

If you are a church Web master, you can improve the design of your church's Web site by implementing the suggestions I list below. These tips address the worst problems I have found in my research, including a number of outdated Web site design techniques. Visit my site for more explanation about these suggestions.

Web site

For design inspiration, browse the virtual gallery of nearly 500 (to date) church home pages on my Web site, a resource available nowhere else. Also consider joining The Church Webmasters' Forum that I host on my site.

And pastors, if your church lacks the resources to develop a great Web site on its own, consider using one of the many CMS (content management systems) solutions I list on my Web site.

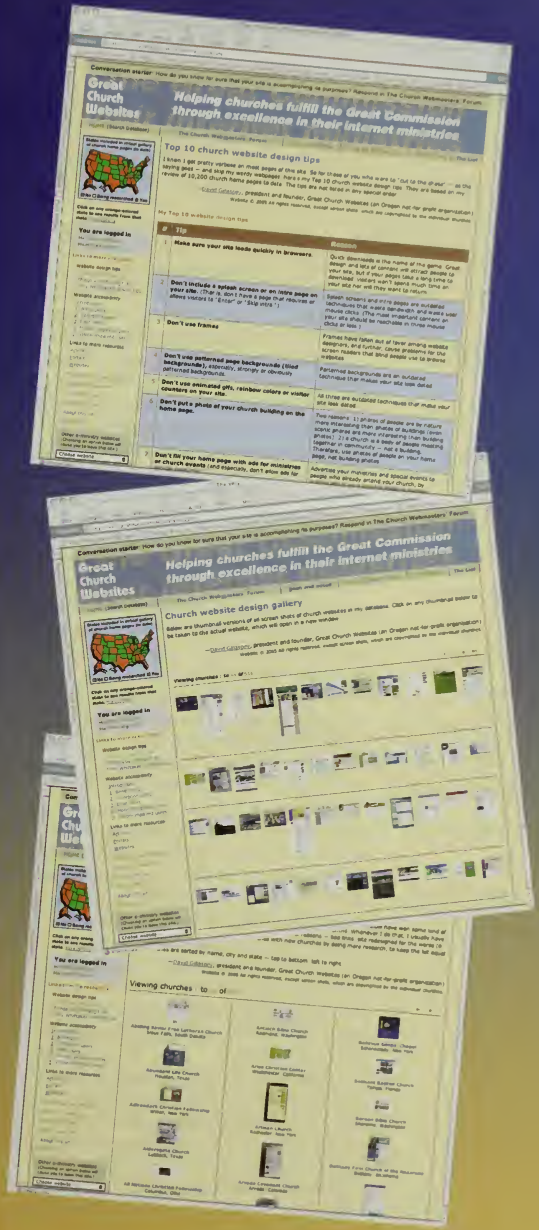
A well-designed and implemented church Web site has the potential to attract people to a church.

Here are the top 10 Web site design tips for church Web masters:

1. Make sure your site loads quickly in browsers.
2. Don't include a splash screen or an intro page on your site.
3. Don't use frames.
4. Don't use patterned or tiled page backgrounds.
5. Don't use animated gifs, rainbow colors or visitor counters on your site.
6. Don't put a photo of your church building on the home page; use photos of people instead.
7. Don't fill your home page with ads for ministries or church events.
8. Include on your home page the following, in easy-to-find locations: church address (including city and state), phone number, weekend service times and email link to Web master.
9. Make sure every graphic has an "alt" text description for it in the underlying HTML code. (This helps blind people browse your Web site.)
10. Make sure users can access every link on your Web site, including links in drop-down menus, by using a combination of the tab key and up and down arrow keys. (This helps motion-impaired people browse your Web site.)

David Gillaspey is president of Great Church Websites, a not-for-profit corporation he founded to promote excellence in church Web site design. This article originally appeared in the Christian News Northwest *newspaper of Portland, Ore.*

How congregations can improve their Web site design



Conversation starter: How do you know for sure that your site is accomplishing its purposes? Respond in The Church Webmasters' Forum

Helping churches fulfill the Great Commission through excellence in their internet ministries

Top 10 church website design tips

I know I get pretty verbose on most pages of this site. So for those of you who want to "cut to the chase" — as the saying goes — and skip my wordy webpages, here's my Top 10 church website design tips. They are based on my review of 10,200 church home pages to date. The tips are not listed in any special order.

—David Gillaspey, president and founder, Great Church Websites (an Oregon not-for-profit organization)
Website © 2005 All rights reserved, except screen shots, which are copyrighted by the individual churches

My Top 10 website design tips

#	Tip	Reason
1	**Make sure your site loads quickly in browsers.**	Quick downloads is the name of the game. Great design and lots of content will attract people to your site, but if your pages take a long time to download, visitors won't spend much time on your site nor will they want to return.
2	**Don't include a splash screen or an intro page on your site.** (That is, don't have a page that requires or allows visitors to "Enter" or "Skip intro".)	Splash screens and intro pages are outdated techniques that waste bandwidth and waste user mouse clicks. (The most important content on your site should be reachable in three mouse clicks or less.)
3	**Don't use frames.**	Frames have fallen out of favor among website designers, and further, cause problems for the screen readers that blind people use to browse websites.
4	**Don't use patterned page backgrounds (tiled backgrounds),** especially, strongly or obviously patterned backgrounds.	Patterned backgrounds are an outdated technique that makes your site look dated.
5	**Don't use animated gifs, rainbow colors or visitor counters on your site.**	All three are outdated techniques that make your site look dated.
6	**Don't put a photo of your church building on the home page.**	Two reasons: 1) photos of people are by nature more interesting than photos of buildings (even scenic photos are more interesting than building photos); 2) a church is a body of people meeting together in community — not a building. Therefore, use photos of people on your home page, not building photos.
7	**Don't fill your home page with ads for ministries or church events** (and especially, don't allow ads for	Advertise your ministries and special events to people who already attend your church, by

Church website design gallery

Below are thumbnail versions of all screen shots of church websites in my database. Click on any thumbnail below to be taken to the actual website, which will open in a new window.

—David Gillaspey, president and founder, Great Church Websites (an Oregon not-for-profit organization)
Website © 2005 All rights reserved, except screen shots, which are copyrighted by the individual churches

Viewing churches 1 to of

Screen captures www.greatchurchwebsites.org

Mercy not retribution

by Ted Grimsrud

We live in punitive times. Our nation, the world's one great superpower, exerted its military to attack, first Afghanistan and then Iraq, in part because people wanted retaliation for Sept. 11, 2001.

Our criminal justice system follows a lock 'em up and throw away the key philosophy. Between 1924 and 1975, we imprisoned about 100 prisoners per 100,000 population. Since 1975, the rate has increased to more than 500 per 100,000.

One more way we practice retribution; following child-raising "experts" advocating spanking as a core element of "raising kids God's way." James Dobson, for example, writes that "we have a God-given responsibility as parents to shape the will. When a youngster [acts out with] stiff-necked rebellion, you had better take it out of him, and pain is a marvelous purifier."

That Jesus was an Old Testament person is to me the clearest refutation of those who see the Old Testament (either in rejecting it or embracing it) as a "bloody book."

All three types of violence often have theological bases. It is no accident that in the United States those identifying themselves as Bible-believing Christians are much more likely than the rest of the population to support retributive acts.

Many who are troubled by seeing Christians so supportive of the punitive mindset blame the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

I once led a long-term Bible study group. When someone suggested something from the Old Testament, another member, a frank woman in her early 80s, declared, "I don't want to spend any more time with that bloody book."

More recently, I had an argument with two friends about the Old Testament. They both dismissed it as hopeless—too violent, "and look at Bible thumpers today," they said. I argued that the Bible thumpers are misreading the Old Testament.

Dutch restorative justice advocate Eugene Bianchi says we maybe should apply "homeopathic theory" to our situation. It will take a dose of what made us sick to cure us. Since a certain biblical theology got us into this illness in the West, he argues that it may well take a dose of biblical theology to free us of it.

When I refer to Old Testament Salvation, I mean it in two senses. One is the salvation of the Old Testament, that is, that the Old Testament is an essential friend of peacemakers who work in Christian contexts. It can be saved.

The second sense is salvation in the Old Testament. We may save the Old Testament by understanding what it actually says about salvation. This is an important way to come to appreciate the Old Testament as a peaceable book, not a "bloody book."

The Old Testament is pretty big. It contains some difficult passages. My friends offered some great proof texts during our debate.

My response to those passages is to say we need a reading strategy when we take up the Old Testament. It is just like life, like human history. What kind of reading strategy do we have for life? What do we see as the most basic truths?

Do we center on the evil in the world, seeing it as our natural state, and define life in terms of that evil? Or do we center on the good, seeing it as natural, and define life in terms of that good? Is the world a place of abundance or of scarcity?

I believe with my whole heart that Jesus took an abundance approach to life. Not coincidentally, Jesus understood himself as a biblical person—in our terms, an Old Testament person. In fact, that Jesus was an Old Testament person is to me the clearest refutation of those who see the Old Testament (either in rejecting it or embracing it) as a "bloody book."

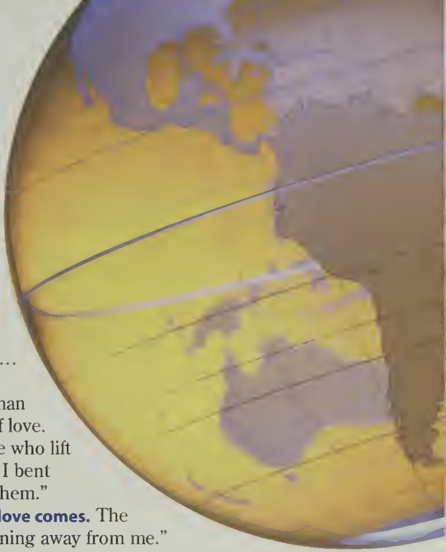
Jesus said this about the Old Testament when he was asked to identify the greatest commandment. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

I don't think the cultured despisers of the Old Testament take this statement seriously enough. On these two commandments stand all the law and the prophets. This is what the Old Testament is about—love God and love neighbor.

We may, if we choose, seek to read life itself in terms of the expressions of love and creativity, then seek to understand the bloodiness in the light of these truths. Jesus challenges us to read the Old Testament in this way. We may put the love of God and neighbor front and center, then read the bad stuff in light of that centerpiece.

Jesus did not create his summary of the law and prophets out of thin air; he quoted directly from the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus. Underlying these commands are certain beliefs about the character of God. Why is it reasonable to call people to

Salvation of and in the Old Testament



love God with all their hearts, souls and minds? Because, according to the story, God loves first.

God's love for God's creation rings throughout the Old Testament, beginning with Genesis 1—as does God's love for God's people. The biblical sense of chosenness does challenge today's readers. God's love for God's people at times seems to justify hostility toward those who are outsiders.

However, the Old Testament's overall message affirms that God makes the chosen people God's own in order to bless all the families of the earth, as Genesis 12:3 says. When God's people are not living as a blessing, they are told they risk reaping some bad consequences.

The overall message tells us that the God of the Old Testament is a God of love, a God who seeks to bring salvation to the whole world.

The Old Testament God saves straight out of God's love. The Old Testament does not, in its overall message, tell us that God's holiness and perfection prevent God from simply offering forgiveness and salvation; neither does the Old Testament in its overall message portray God as a God of wrath who requires sacrificial violence to balance the scales of justice in order to save.

When the human race seems at a dead end, symbolized by Abraham and Sarah's barrenness in Genesis 11, God intervenes to give them children, to make them a blessing for all the families of the earth. When the children of Abraham are trapped in brutal slavery in Egypt and cry out in their misery and despair, God intervenes to set them free.

When the freed slaves wander in the wilderness for 40 years, in part unprepared to construct a society that would serve long-term human well-being, God intervenes to give them the commandments. These commandments are a gift, meant to foster societal wholeness and justice. They are not requirements that must be met in order to gain God's acceptance; they are directives given because of God's acceptance.

When the people are given the land and prove unable to sustain wholeness and justice, they reap the consequences, but God does not abandon them. Rather, God intervenes to offer hope and empowerment, sustaining the people of the promise and giving them a future.

For one short Old Testament passage that portrays what God and salvation actually are like, consider Hosea 11:1-9. God loves God's people, bringing them out of slavery in Egypt. "I loved him, ... I called them, ... I taught [them] to walk, ... I healed them, ... I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them."

Then the test of this love comes. The people "are bent on turning away from me." God then speaks of the people suffering as a consequence, seeming to point toward the stereotypical retributive justice. The people hurt God, so God hurts back. But no: "How can I give you up!" God cries. "My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy [Israel]; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath" (11:1-9).

God does not come in wrath in the end. God comes in suffering, persevering love. Justice for this God is about healing, not about retribution. This God responds to wrongdoing by seeking to repair, not by seeking to punish.

The Old Testament does not, in its overall message, tell us that God's holiness and perfection prevent God from simply offering forgiveness and salvation.

Jesus draws directly on the Old Testament when he rejects retributive justice. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:43-45).

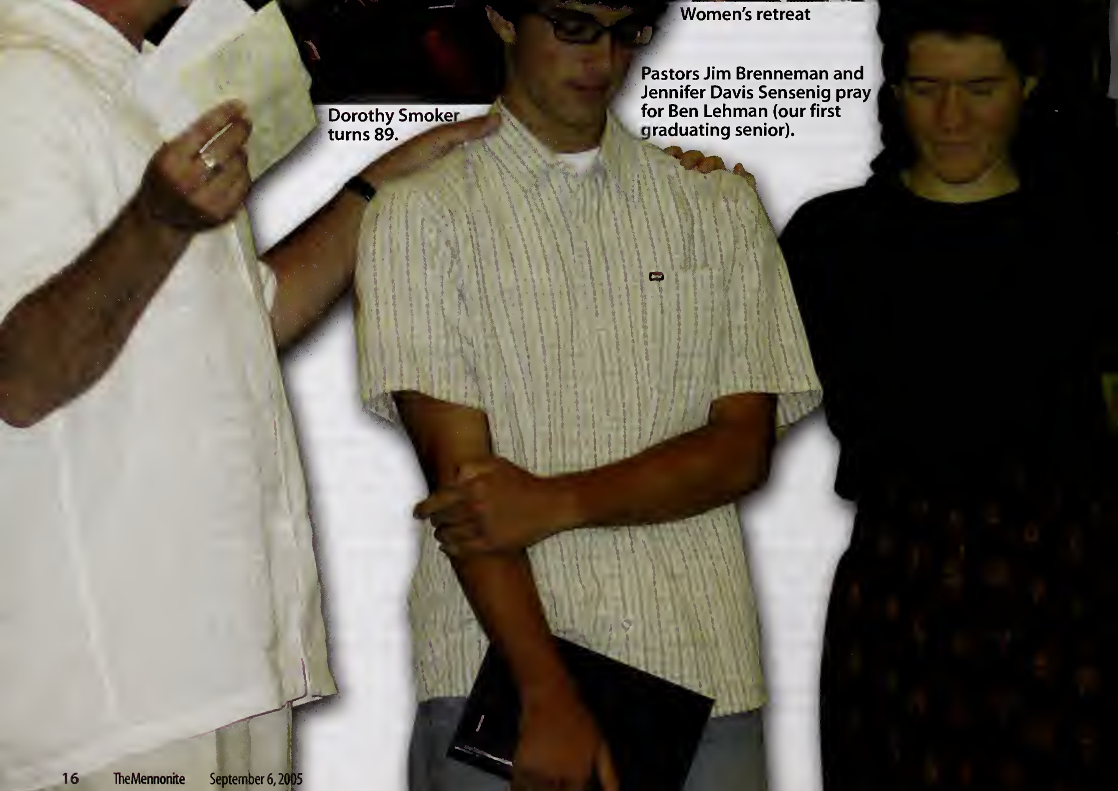
God loves everyone and treats everyone with care. This is the God of the Old Testament; this is the God of Jesus, and this is the God we should be worshiping today.

Ted Grimsrud teaches theology at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

Mennonite
Church
USA

Women's retreat

Dorothy Smoker turns 89.


Pastors Jim Brenneman and Jennifer Davis Sensenig pray for Ben Lehman (our first graduating senior).

Thirteen new members join in June.

Photos by Kimberly Medendorp

Church members take part in the third annual Palm Sunday Peace Parade.

ke Cameron is held by sist r Madeleine as
e is dedicated by his paren s, Scott and
argie.

Pasadena Mennonite Church, Pasadena, Calif., celebrated its 19th birthday on Pentecost. The church's senior pastor is Jim Brenneman, and the associate pastors are Jennifer Davis Sensenig and Bert Newton. The church has around 120 adults on a Sunday, with about 45 in children's programming and nursery.

People pose at the annual all-church retreat.

When is a rock concert just a rock concert?

Alan Stucky is youth pastor at Buhler (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

In the world of popular Christianity these days, the catchword is "Purpose Driven." We have purpose-driven churches, purpose-driven youth ministry, purpose-driven evangelism, purpose-driven meetings. It feels like everything down to the kitchen sink is purpose driven.

Don't get me wrong, I believe we need to be asking ourselves constantly why we are doing what we are doing. It's not good enough to simply do things because they've always been done. The thing I wonder about in all of this purpose-driven stuff is what purposes are acceptable ones. Is simply providing an event so that already existing members can have fun an acceptable purpose for a church function? I think the answer is usually yes but only if it's a potluck or something of that nature.

At the end of the day, we need to recognize that having fun as a church is just as important as any Sunday morning sermon. In fact, it's probably more important.

Being a youth pastor and, more importantly, 24 years old, I feel like I'm aware of some of the up and coming youth movements and feelings within the youth and young adults of the Mennonite Church. I can tell you that most Mennonite churches aren't overly willing to sponsor big events for the younger crowd that don't fit into "normal" ideas of fun, unless there is a "purpose."

Case in point. About four years ago I put together an outdoor Christian rock 'n roll concert at my home church in Kansas. (And yes, rock 'n roll and Christian can go in the same sentence.) We invited three bands; one from Bethel College, one from Tabor College and one from Hesston College, all nearby. The members of all the bands were Christians who liked to play music on the loud side, all of them had clean lyrics, and one of the bands later worked for Mennonite Mission Network. Nevertheless, when I proposed the idea to the deacon board of our church, I got a clear message. "Yes, you can do this, but only if it is used as an evangelism tool." They wanted the band members to preach between songs. I assured them the bands would share some of their testimony, and we were allowed to move forward with our plans.

In contrast to this, my home church is a wonderful old building with great acoustics. We have had many different choral groups come through from various colleges and high schools. At no time in my years of attending these concerts do I remember the choir members stopping the concert to give their personal testimony.

I point out this story not to chastise but to show that we as a church are missing a couple of important things. First, the irony of preaching at a rock concert is that most of the people who need to hear the message of the gospel the most will be completely turned off if you preach at them. It's a rock concert; there's a reason they are here and not in the pew on Sunday morning. Second, we are missing church being simply fun. Enjoying life with other Christians is one of the things God wants us to do. Having a good time with a group of your friends and fellow Christians is being in the presence of God, whether you have a sermon or not.

More importantly, I point this out so that we can be aware of what we are telling our youth, without words, mind you, that the church is supposed to be. Basically we bore the pants off every high-schooler in Sunday school, we don't say anything that pertains to their lives in a worship service and more often than not we don't take them seriously when they have something new to offer. Subconsciously we are telling the younger generations two things: (1) What you like doesn't matter or isn't worth doing and (2) church is not supposed to be fun. At best these messages are not helpful; at worst they are slowly choking the life out of the church of the future.

At the end of the day, we need to recognize that having fun as a church is just as important as any Sunday morning sermon. In fact, it's probably more important. Now I know I've made it seem as though Mennonites don't know how to have fun. In reality I think we do know how to have fun as a church, and we're already doing it. It's called fellowship. Now all we have to do is add 800 watts of screaming guitars.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Masculine spirituality**—Alan Kreider
- **On men searching for God**—David Boshart

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Anniversary service brings reconciliation

'Momentous healing' leaves Brazilian Mennonite church leaders rejoicing.

When the congregations of the Associação Evangélica Menonita (Evangelical Mennonite Association) celebrated their 50th anniversary July 21-23 at Camp Gileade, near Brasilia, Brazil, they didn't whitewash the tragedy and pain running through AEM's history.

Growing out of acknowledged brokenness, including murder, suicide and various forms of seduction, a church of 2,500 members flourishes. The 36 congregations of this association have recently established nine church-plants in Brazil and created their own international mission agency in 1998.

During one anniversary celebration message, João Fernando Andrade, vice president of AEM, invited people desiring healing to come forward for a prayer. Among the many who responded was a pastoral couple that had broken away from AEM following a conflict with another pastor and his wife. The pastor who left AEM described the pain of the separation with sorrow. He and his wife desired reconciliation, he said.

"The room [full of people] was rapt with attention," said Stanley W. Green, Mennonite Mission Network's executive director, who attended the celebration with Ursula, his wife. "There was sobbing across the auditorium."

When the second pastoral couple came forward to extend forgiveness, AEM church leaders surrounded the estranged foursome with prayers and embraces. The assembly erupted in joyful dancing.

"According to AEM church leaders, this was a momentous healing—a miracle. People remained talking late into the night about what happened," Green said.

The first Mennonites arrived in Brazil in 1637 as part of a Dutch settlement. These Mennonites were forced to leave when the Portuguese took control 17 years later. In 1930, southern Brazil became home to 160 Mennonite refugee families from Europe.

One of Mennonite Mission Network's predecessor agencies, Mennonite Board of Missions, sent or related to more than 70 mission workers in northern and central Brazil from 1954 to 1975. Their ministries helped to establish the congregations that make up AEM.

Four of these early workers attended the 50th anniversary celebrations: David and Rose Hostetler and Glenn and Lois Musselman.

Another predecessor agency, the Commission on Overseas Mission, sent missionaries in the mid-1960s to work among the German-speaking Mennonites in the area around Curitiba in southern Brazil.

This agency also sent its first workers to Portuguese-speaking communities in 1975.

Stanley W. Green

Members of the national board of the Evangelical Mennonite Association of Brazil ask for God's guidance and receive the blessing of the church's General Assembly during the 50th anniversary celebration. From left: Abraão Reis, Nelson Torres, Carlos Carvalho, Amadeu Coimbra, João Fernando Andrade and Hans Peters

Today the German-speaking Mennonite churches and the Portuguese-speaking Mennonite churches work closely together, a collaboration that, according to Glenn Musselman, has strengthened both groups spiritually and financially.

AEM ministries have included church planting, overseas mission, community development, bookstores, elementary schools, remedial school programs, day-care centers, a clinic, literature and publishing programs and a women's organization. A decentralized seminary program provides leaders for AEM congregations.

The most recent Mennonite Mission Network missionaries working in Brazil, Betty and Otis Hochstetler, retired in 2004. Although they continue to live in the country near their children and grandchildren, they relate to AEM fraternally rather than in leadership positions.

While leaders from the five regions that make up AEM gathered to celebrate the church's anniversary, they also conducted business meetings. They proposed a name change to Alianca Evangélica Menonita (Evangelical Mennonite Alliance) because a current law places difficult financial obligations on associations.

The name change also identifies a movement toward decentralization of AEM, with more administrative functions being transferred to regional governing bodies.

Original music written by AEM member Paulo Henrique Souza beautifully summed up the spirit of the first 50 years of the Brazilian Mennonite Church's life, said Rose Hostetler, who made Brazil her home for 14 years.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

Mennonite chaplain in prison ministry

Bill Hartwell preaches 'what's beyond the grave' to men on death row.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
TECUMSEH STATE CORRECTIONAL
INSTITUTION
"MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

Courtesy photo

Bill Hartwell, a former war photographer, now serves as a Mennonite chaplain at the Tecumseh (Neb.) State Correctional Institution.

For Bill Hartwell, church is a maximum security prison and most of his congregation is in for life. Hartwell, 61, is an ordained prison chaplain at Tecumseh State Correctional Institute in Tecumseh, Neb. He makes the 90-minute trip from his home in Omaha to preach to inmates twice a week.

"Our prisons are full, the men hunger and thirst for spiritual truth," Hartwell says. "This is where God wants me. I look at the men through the eyes of Jesus"

After 20 years in the U.S. Air Force as a war photographer, which included a one-year stint in Vietnam, Bill solidified his position against war and decided to join the Mennonites.

"In the Air Force I had nothing to do with the shedding of other men's blood, but I didn't like the principles of war," Hartwell says. "God led me to the Mennonite church; it was what I needed."

Hartwell spent several years as a pastor at Northside Christian Family Center in Omaha before responding to a call for a volunteer prison chaplain in 1993. He began as part of Good News Prison and Jail Ministry at the Douglas County Correctional Institute in Nebraska. Bill now works at the correctional institute in Tecumseh and relies solely on his Air Force pension and whatever donations he receives from the church. His ministerial credential for chaplaincy is granted by Central Plains Mennonite Conference, one of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences.

When he was asked whether he wanted to work with misdemeanor or felony inmates, Hartwell said he wanted nothing less than maximum security. He wanted to preach to the worst of the worst, inmates facing life sentences or death row.

"No one wants to minister to 'those kind of people,' " Hartwell says. "I said that I would minister to other children of God, because that's what they are. They're not 'those kind of people.' They are my brothers."

He remembers one prisoner asking him why he would waste his time on them.

"I asked him who Jesus spent his time with—tax collectors, prostitutes, murderers," Hartwell says. "Jesus stayed with the worst of the worst, too."

Hartwell says working with prisoners has shaped the way he preaches.

"I have to preach to men on death row," he says. "I have to preach what's beyond the grave. I can't sugarcoat this stuff. They don't want to be made to feel better, they want to be saved. We are living men dying. We have to die to live. I could never preach the same way in a church environment."

Prison ministry is not an easy task. Hartwell describes his work as a thankless job: it is both mentally and physically draining, but the men are worth it. One of his main concerns is financial support. Hartwell's ministry extends far beyond the prison walls. Every week he receives about a dozen letters from prisoners who are or have been in his program. He gets letters from prisoners from throughout the Midwest.

"I answer them all by postcards mailed to me by relatives from out of state," he says. "These postcards allow the inmates to see outside while inside."

The inmates aren't the only ones who receive guidance and counsel from Hartwell. Families of inmates also are a priority in his ministry.

"People are hurting inside and outside. Prisoners' families are doing the same time outside prison when their relatives are in prison," he says.

One inmate asked Hartwell to be with his wife for the birth of their baby. "That was a historic time for me," Hartwell says, thinking the doctors probably mistook him for the father.

At another inmate's request, Hartwell spends several nights a week with a 79-year-old woman in her hospital room. "I'm there all night; I sleep in a hospital bed right beside her," he says. "I hold her hand and read from the Bible until she's asleep."

Hartwell also performs funerals for families of inmates and often relays messages of peace from ex-gang members in prison to their former gangs on the outside.

"I'm trying to prevent what I'm seeing in prison," he says. "Men are just revolving in and out."

Because he speaks to people from a myriad of backgrounds, it's tough to bring a Mennonite perspective. "The men come from across the spectrum, from all denominations and faiths," Hartwell says. "I just preach the doctrine of God's Word—Jesus. But lots of them pick up the peaceful stance from my speaking. In 12 years, God has blessed over 5,000 men who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Filling up that book of life, that's my job." *—Brian Schlabach for Mennonite Church USA*

I can't sugarcoat this stuff. They don't want to be made to feel better, they want to be saved. We are living men dying.... I could never preach the same way in a church environment. —Bill Hartwell

MCC ends 33-year program in Philippines

Workers confronted sex trade at two U.S. military bases, worked for land rights.

Mennonite Central Committee closed its program in the Philippines last month after 33 years. Farewell celebrations in Manila and in Davao City served as a time of celebration and lament, with past and present MCC workers, partners and friends sharing stories, memories and thanks.

"Thanks so much for walking with us," said Priscilla Ramoso, a former Catholic sister, at a recent farewell celebration in the southern island of Mindanao. "Your hands were empty. But you were holding our hands. You listened. You didn't say so much. But thank you for making Jesus' presence present with us."

The move is part of a larger shift of resources in MCC's international programs.

"Because the Philippines has a vital and experienced sector of nongovernmental organizations, we made the difficult decision to wrap up MCC's work there," said Ed Martin, director of MCC's Central/Southern Asia programs.

MCC worked in the Philippines from 1946 to 1950 as part of post-World War II rehabilitation in Abra Province in northern Luzon.

In 1975, the late William Snyder, former executive director of MCC, identified Mindanao as a major flash point for conflict in southeast Asia. At the time the Philippine government, with considerable U.S. military aid, was fighting a Muslim effort to achieve more political autonomy in that island, which had been their traditional homeland.

Filipino Christian and Muslim friends in Mindanao identified for MCC the issue of land as being at the heart of the struggle. Hence, the first MCC workers in 1977, Gene Stoltzfus and Dorothy Friesen, focused their writing and public witness efforts on the impact of large multinational agribusiness companies—such as Dole pineapple plantations—in Mindanao.

Later, MCC workers lived in Muslim and indigenous tribal communities in Mindanao to stand with the people and to share their stories through the global church and press outlets.

Filipinos identified another major arena of concern for MCC attention: the presence of Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Field, the two largest U.S. military bases outside American soil. The bases spawned a dehumanizing economy of sex bars and sleazy entertainment for the thousands of foreign troops sailing in and out of those bases.

MCC workers sat with Filipino women in those bars and together organized an empowerment effort to support their entrapped friends. When Filipinos spoke out against those bases, MCC workers supported them with articles and audiovisuals in the North American press and in testimony to the U.S. Congress. Since the Philippine Congress voted to expel the bases in 1991, the sex bars of Olongapo have largely disappeared, and some Filipinos feel a greater independence.

MCC workers over the years have sought to amplify Filipino voices calling for land rights of minorities, for fair treatment of workers in international mining operations and for enhancing nonviolent approaches to promoting change and fairness in Philippine society.

A Muslim partner of MCC in recent years, Guaimel Alim, from Cotabato, Mindanao, said at the recent farewell, "I bring a testimony that Christians and Muslims can not only work and play together, but they can love each other."

Recalling how he and his wife were invited into the MCC house in Manila during her medical treatment in the capital, he said, "I learned from that what is taught in the Holy Book: 'to do to the least of these is to do unto me.'"—*Earl Martin for Mennonite Central Committee*

Rob Haarsager

Sudanese farmers replant with MCC help

Teresa Othol, a farmer in the village of Papwojo in the Upper Nile region of southern Sudan, has planted a flourishing garden of corn, okra and pumpkin. Othol, pictured with two of her four children, fled Papwojo with her family when an armed group attacked the village and destroyed her home in March 2004. Armed groups have long plagued the region as a result of the 22-year Sudanese civil war, which ended in January 2005 but left much of southern Sudan in deep poverty. Othol and other villagers returned several months after the attack and were given basic supplies by Church Ecumenical Action in Sudan, a relief and development organization of southern Sudanese churches supported by Mennonite Central Committee. The seeds for Othol's garden were provided through an agriculture project of CEAS. MCC funded the $72,000 project, which has benefitted 830 households. Later this year, as part of the project, CEAS will distribute fishing hooks and lines so residents can fish the nearby Nile and Lol rivers.—*MCC*

Partners to create online encyclopedia

GAMEO wants Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia available by December.

Courtesy photo

GAMEO administrative group (left to right): Bert Friesen, John Sharp, Sam Steiner, Abe Dueck

Know GAMEO? The partners in an Internet-based Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia hope this question will become increasingly familiar in the coming months.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission are partners in producing the online encyclopedia.

The administrative group appointed by the GAMEO partners met June 14 in Winnipeg to plan the structure and timetable for the project. The goal is to launch the encyclopedia by the end of 2005.

Initially the encyclopedia will be English language-only and will focus on North American content. As global partners are added to the project, the range of international subject entries and language possibilities will expand.

An early project, which will require numerous volunteers, will scan and upload the content of the five-volume Mennonite Encyclopedia published by Herald Press from 1955 through 1959, with a supplemental volume in 1990.

Bert Friesen, who chaired the administrative group meeting, says GAMEO always will rely on dedicated volunteers for writing and editorial work, but the encyclopedia plans to find funding to support core administrative work.

Although the encyclopedia will be freely available on the Internet, the partners hope to attract institutional and corporate sponsors who will support GAMEO's expansion and maintenance through an annual donation. Individual donations are welcome.

GAMEO is an expansion of the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, a project of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada since 1996. Sam Steiner, managing editor of the current encyclopedia, says the some 2,500 articles already in CMEO will provide an excellent base for the expanded encyclopedia.

In addition, 125 confessions of faith or denominational statements are available in a "source documents" section. CMEO can be seen at www.mhsc.ca/.

John Sharp, former director of Mennonite Church USA's Historical Committee, says a U.S. editorial board will be established to parallel the current Canadian board.

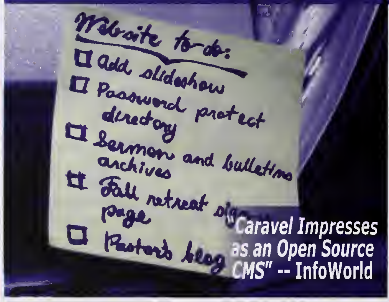
Organizers hope the two boards can meet jointly this December, but most of their work will take place by email. The appointments to the U.S. editorial board are incomplete.

Abe Dueck, executive director of the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, says GAMEO's ultimate goal is to provide reliable information on all facets of Anabaptist Mennonite life, from 16th-century Europe to 21st-century Africa and Latin America.

Unlike a print publication, GAMEO will continue to be updated and expanded as long as constituency support continues.

Those wishing to donate to GAMEO, volunteer for writing or editorial work or to stay informed on the encyclopedia progress may contact any member of the administrative group. Their contact information is Bert Friesen (bfrie@mts.net); John Sharp (JohnS@MennoniteUSA.org); Abe Dueck (ajdueck@mbconf.ca); Sam Steiner (mhsc@uwaterloo.ca).—*Sam Steiner for Mennonite Church USA*

Caravel: *What's your time worth?*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Panel reviews Lutheran condemnations

Lutheran-Mennonite commission hopes for official declaration in three years.

The first meeting of the Lutheran-Mennonite International Study Commission took place at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, June 27-July 1.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Mennonite World Conference (MWC) sponsor this study commission, whose mandate is to consider the condemnations of Anabaptists in Lutheran confessional writings and their applicability to the teaching of Anabaptists and Mennonites today.

The commission heard major papers by Goshen (Ind.) College professor John D. Roth and Lutheran professor Gottfried Seebass, Heidelberg, Germany, on "The Condemnations of Anabaptists in the Augsburg Confession and the Book of Concord: Their Historical Meaning, Purpose and Effect."

Through its deliberations the commission became more sensitive to the lasting memory of the suffering of Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation as a result of persecution by civil authorities in Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed areas.

For Mennonites, the condemnations in Lutheran confessions have played a role in this regard. The commission is also aware that Christians of all confessions were victims of persecution in that period. Reflection on this matter raises serious questions concerning the theological rationale for pursuing religious and social goals by violent means, including torture and killing.

At the national level, Lutheran-Mennonite dialogues have already been conducted in France (1981-1984), in Germany (1989-1992) and in the United States (2001-2004). These dialogues also considered the condemnations of Anabaptists in Lutheran confessions.

Commission members from the Mennonite and Lutheran sides presented and interpreted the reports of the national dialogues, which were discussed in detail. The outcomes of these dialogues constitute an important resource for the current, international commission. A systematic inventory of the content of the national reports will remain a working document for the commission.

A common assessment of the condemnations in the Lutheran confessions will require substantial work in the commission on the historical context of the condemnations and the hermeneutics of confessions, reflection on issues of soteriology and ecclesiology, and discussion of the relationship between church and civil authorities.

The inclusion of wider issues pertinent to the two church bodies will serve the main mandate of the study commission.

At the end of its work, which will take at least three years, the commission hopes that an official declaration concerning the condemnations can be made by the authoritative bodies of the two world communions.

During the Strasbourg meeting, Lutherans and Mennonites, alternately, led morning and evening prayers. On June 29 the commission visited the Unterlinden Museum in Colmar with the Isenheim Altar, as well as the Bibliothèque Humaniste in Sélestat and had dinner at the Mennonite farm restaurant Nouveau Chemin at Le Hang.

On June 30, representatives of the French and German Lutheran and Mennonite churches were invited to a reception at the institute for mutual exchanges on the life of the two churches and on the work of the study commission.

Rainer Burkart (Mennonite), Neuwied, Germany, and Seebass co-chair the commission.

The commission became more deeply sensitive to the lasting memory of the suffering of Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation.

The co-secretaries are Larry Miller, MWC Executive Secretary, and Sven Oppegaard, LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs.

Other Mennonite participants are Claude Baecher (Hegenheim, France), Hellen Biseko Bradburn (Arusha, Tanzania) and Roth (Mennonite Church USA).

The next meeting of the commission will take place in Strasbourg in June 2006.—*Mennonite World Conference*

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CALENDAR

First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, ***nine-month centennial celebration***, August 2005 to April 2006. Theme: Rooted in Love, Growing in Grace. For more information contact Ron Geiser at larkg@wcoil.com.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"God's Own Peace: Systems Theory and Spirituality,"* Nov. 2, Dearborn, Mich. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"Charting Self: The Beliefs Chart as a Tool for Change,"* Nov. 3, Warren, Mich. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations,"* Nov. 4-5, St. Louis, Mo. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *"Mediation Skills Training Institute,"* Nov. 14-18, Atlanta, Ga. Registration brochures and discount coupons are available at our Web site www.LMPeaceCenter.org or by phoning our office 630-627-0507.

Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, is dedicating a renovation of its facility on Sept. 25, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The theme is ***"Framing the Past and Celebrating the Future."*** Speakers include past and present community leaders. Everyone is invited. For details: http://rainbow.ks.us.mennonite.net

WORKERS

Boshart, Shana Peachey, was ordained June 18 as conference youth minister of Central Plains Mennonite Conference.

Martin, Gary, began July 15 as transitional pastor at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Nissley, Amy, was licensed and installed June 12 as associate pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake, Minn.

Stoltzfus, Eldon, ended July 31 as interim pastor at Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Ind.

Swartley, Mark S., was appointed Aug. 3 as the new executive director of Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pa.

Troyer, Janice, began Aug. 2 as transitional youth pastor at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Weishaupt, Aimee, began July 5 as coordinator of Christian education at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Yoder, Helen, was ordained June 26 as associate pastor of West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Zimmerman, John, was licensed and installed July 17 as pastor of Pleasantview Mennonite Church, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Bauman, Kate Olivia, Aug. 3, to Steven and Dana Batchelor Bauman, Elmira, Ont.

Benner, Renae Elena, May 23, to Darin and Maribeth Benner, Hatfield, Pa.

Brandenberger, Jayce Bryant, Aug. 13, to Elmer and Rhoda Troyer Brandenberger, Lagrange, Ind.

Byler, Sophia Elizabeth, Dec. 5, 2004, received for adoption June 6, to Andy and Sarah Byler, Gap, Pa.

Coblentz, Micah James, July 21, to Zach and Sarah Coblentz, Uniontown, Ohio.

Davis, Jett Logan, July 6, to Kip and Carrie Davis, Normal, Ill.

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Meet AAI team member
Pat Swartzendruber, associate

Through work in the medical community and church organizations for more than 30 years, Pat has gained valuable experience in administration, marketing and development. Her M.S.A. degree is from Notre Dame. She assists organizations in enhancing performance and designing new strategies toward long-term mission, vision and goals.

Other AAI team members: Jerry Kennell, Rich Gerig, Dan Hess, Michael Wiese and Becky Drumm.

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Fiz, Santiago Alex, July 26, to Jorge and Bertie Pfaltzgraff Fiz, Denver.

Gingrich, Edison James, Aug. 19, to Dustin and Sarah Frye Gingrich, Landisville, Pa.

Gingrich, Owen, May 22, to Oliver and Heather Gingrich, North Wales, Pa.

Hershberger, Simon Matthew, Aug. 1, to Marc and Jennifer Kuhns Hershberger, Lansdale, Pa.

Hochstetler, Erick Matthew, Nov. 16, 2003, received for adoption July 5 by Douglas and Heidi Zendt Hochstetler, Alburtis, Pa.

Hoover, Kathryn Mary, March 8, to Brian and Heather Hoover, Souderton, Pa.

Keller, Riley Grace, Aug. 6, to Daniel C. and Kimberly Roth Keller, Sellersville, Pa.

Kozel, Jude Walker, Aug. 11, to Nick and Deanna Steiner Kozel, Harrisonburg, Va.

Lapp, Edwin John, June 14, to David Lapp and Amy Hochstetler, Philadelphia.

McGowan, Emma Joy, July 19, to Mike and Jen McGowan, Lancaster, Pa.

Moyer-Diener, Naomi Elise, May 17, to David and Johanna Moyer-Diener, McAllen, Texas.

Nuzum, Kaitlin Renee, Aug. 14, to Jeremy and Cecilia Lambright Nuzum, Lagrange, Ind.

Paul, Kaden Alexander, July 31, to Keith and Megan Pletcher Paul, Middlebury, Ind.

Ulrich, Brooklyn Anne, Aug. 5, to Matt and Amy Ulrich, Metamora, Ill.,

Vasey, Timothy Mark, July 28, to John and Jennifer Doerr Vasey, Harleysville, Pa.

Wahl, Andrew Leonard, July 23, to Gary Wahl and Ann Leonard, Denver.

Wiens, Gavin Jeremiah, July 27, to Joe and Amanda Hiebert Wiens, Altona, Man.

MARRIAGES

Bonson/Yoder: Clint Bonson, Reedsville, Pa., and Kristina Yoder, Belleville, Pa., July 30 at Maple Grove, Belleville, Pa.

Clyne/Wiebe: Tracy Clyne and Jeff Wiebe, July 2 at St. Andrew's, Winnipeg, Man.

Doell/Miller: Diana Doell, Altona, Man., and Jordan Miller, Altona, June 18 in Altona.

Duot/Manyoun: Panther Duot, Grand Rapids, Mich., and Rebecca Kuei Mabil Manyoun, Telford, Pa., July 2 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Elias/Fast: Rob Elias and Alison Fast, July 16 in Altona, Man.

Falk/Friesen: Kim Falk and Shane Friesen, Sept. 3 at Assiniboine Park, Winnipeg, Man.

Heinrichs/Wong: Andrew Heinrichs III and Sandy Wong, Sept. 4.

Kip/Lehman: Abbi Kip, Cleveland, Ohio, and Luke Lehman, Orrville, Ohio, July 2 at Bible Believers Baptist Church, Madedonia, Ohio.

Kirkton/Koontz: Sarah Kirkton, Goshen, Ind., and Timothy Koontz, Goshen, July 23 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Klassen/Myert: Carl Klassen and Dawn Myert, July 9 in Winnipeg, Man.

Melius/Rider: Roy Melius, McClure, Pa., and Angela Rider, McClure, Pa., Aug. 6 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville, Pa.

Roth/Tone: Heidi Roth, Millersburg, Ohio, and Bill Tone, New Haven, Ind., July 31 at the home of Joe and Linda Hershberger-Kirk, Millersburg.

Voth/Wiebe: Colin Voth, Altona, Man., and Carla Wiebe, Sept. 5 at Winkler (Man.) Mennonite Brethren Church.

DEATHS

Alliman, Gilbert W., 86, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 3. Spouse: Mae Richard Alliman. Parents: Daniel and Sarah Wyse Alliman. Children: Kirk, June A. Yoder; three grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Greencroft Meetinghouse, Goshen.

Blauch, Edna Waneta Moreland, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died July 27. Spouse: Ralph Blauch (deceased). Parents: Benjamin Cleveland and Anna Pearl Culp Moreland. Children: Nancy Reinhart, Kay Grubb, Jackie Deputy; seven grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Burial: July 30 at Weavers Cemetary, Harrisonburg.

Detweiler, Dorothy Bishop, 73, Telford, Pa., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Willard Detweiler. Parents: Russell and Jennie Andrews Bishop. Children: Gary, Gail Krady; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 15 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Franz, Leonard, 84, Spokane, Wash., died July 30. Parents: Julius A. and Agatha Dyck Franz. Funeral: Aug. 5 at Menno Mennonite Church, Ritzville, Wash.

Gerber, Bonnie Jean Payne, 92, Waynesboro, Va., died July 18 of pancreatic cancer. Spouse: Irvin Daniel Gerber (deceased). Parents: James Absolom and Maggie Mashburn Payne. Children: Daniel, David, Carolyn Martin, Rosemary King, Barbara Tapping, Nancy Ross, Bonnie Bennett; 18 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 25 at Martins Mennonite Church, Orrville, Ohio.

Hooley, Donella Yoder, 80, Hubbard, Ore., died Aug. 5. Spouse: Edwin Hooley (deceased). Parents: Christian G. and Mayme Hostetler Yoder. Children: Kenneth, Ed; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard.

Additional information about the deceased may now be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the new obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the new obituary form, please call 574-535-6053.

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Kratz, Eva L. Ruth, 96, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 18. Spouse: Irvin L. Kratz (deceased). Parents: Henry and Mary Landes Ruth. Children: Ruth Long, Mary Swartley, Robert; five grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 22 at Souderton Mennonite Homes Chapel.

Krueger, Jacob J., 84, Altona, Man., died July 2. Spouse: Anne Hamm Krueger. Parents: John and Margaret Hamm Krueger. Children: Carol Thiessen, Verona Thiessen; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 5 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Mabe, Esther Wyse, 96, Wayland, Iowa, died June 14. Spouse: William Mabe (deceased). Child: Mildred Wolfe; two grandchildren. Funeral: June 16 at Gay and Ciha Funeral Home, Iowa City, Iowa.

Marshall, Edgar, 81, Centennial, Colo., died July 30 of cancer. Spouse: (1st) Winnifred Marshall (deceased), (2nd) Rachel Driver Marshall. Parents: George and Jeanette Gordon Marshall. Children: Phyllis Shung, Robert, Joycelyn Dookwah; 15 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 6 at First Mennonite Church, Denver.

Maust, Viola Tressler, 87, Springs, Pa., died Aug. 11. Spouse: John E. Maust (deceased). Parents: John and Annie Eichorn Tressler. Children: Dale, Karen; one grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 14 in Springs, Pa.

Nolt, Mervin H., 87, Lititz, Pa., died July 12 of cancer. Spouse: Susan M. Buckwalter Nolt. Parents: Harlan G. and Nettie Hess Nolt. Children: Rachel Ann Rensberger, Jack, Linda S. Helmus, Joe E.; eight grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 18 at Landis Homes Retirement Community, Lititz.

Ross, Daniel Webster, 74, Sarasota, Fla., died Aug. 4 of cancer. Spouse: Velma Ross. Children: Janet Miller, David; two grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 7 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Stauffer, Florence Christophel, 87, Wakarusa, Ind., died June 25. Spouse: Elmer Stauffer. Parents: Ira and Emma Loucks Christophel. Children: Joan Chupp, Kenneth, Clari; six grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: June 28 at Yellow Creek Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Stoltzfus, John Reuben, 32, Charlottesville, Va., died July 12 in an automobile accident. Spouse: Rosemary Shenk. Parents: Allen and Anne Stoltzfus. Children: Christian, Andrew, Daniel, Jacob. Funeral: July 24 at Lindale Mennonite Church, Linville, Pa.

Tisdale, Viola Brydge, 98, Stuarts Draft, Va., died June 4. Spouse: David Tisdale (deceased). Parents: Edward and Isabelle Brydge. Funeral: June 7 at Lynside Mennonite Church, Lyndhurst, Va.

Wyse, Olive G., 99, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 12. Parents: Amos and Luvina Gerig Wyse. Funeral: Aug. 16 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Yoder, Charity G., 92, Belleville, Pa., died Aug. 1. Parents: Ezra M. and M. Malinda Kauffman Yoder. Funeral: Aug. 5 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

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Having served a distinguished 10-year tenure as president of **Bluffton University**, Dr. Lee Snyder has indicated her desire to retire, effective June 30, 2006. Bluffton University is inviting nominations and/or applications for the position of ***president***, expected to assume office on July 1, 2006. Bluffton University is a fully accredited four-year, liberal arts university, affiliated with Mennonite Church USA and located in Bluffton, Ohio, with a student body of approximately 1,200. The university offers academic study in 39 majors and more than 30 minors, an adult degree completion program, and master's degrees in education, organizational management and business administration. Additional information about Bluffton University is available at www.bluffton.edu.

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Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is seeking a ***full-time conference minister***. The conference minister gives overall leadership and direction to the mission, ministry and well-being of MC Sask with particular focus for pastors and congregations. Qualifications include an understanding of and commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist theology and a preference for education and training in a Mennonite-Anabaptist institution, significant pastoral experience within the Mennonite Church, well-developed listening and communication skills, ability to relate to theological diversity and demonstrated administration and organizing skills. The successful candidate will exemplify boldness and creativity in implementing and building on the vision set by the conference. Willingness to travel throughout the province is a necessity. A detailed job description is available on the Web site www.mcsask.ca. For more information and to apply, contact Henry Block, Search Committee, 3214 Milton Str., Saskatoon SK S7L 3X4; 306-933-4660 (day), 683-0524 (evening); email h.gblock@sasktel.net. The appointment will commence mid-February 2006. Applications will be considered until Sept. 30.

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Mennonite Central Committee is recruiting for the position of ***MCC liaison to the United Nations in New York***. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position. The liaison's assignment is to foster a Christian pacifist vision in the conduct of international affairs at the UN, interpret MCC to the UN and advocate relevant policies on behalf of MCC.

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Contact Prem Dick for a copy of the job description and send a letter of intent and a resumé by email to psd@mcc.org or by fax at 717-859-2171 by Sept. 1, 2005. The position is scheduled to begin Dec. 1, 2005.

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CD recordings of the youth and adult programs from Charlotte 2005 are still available for purchase and immediate shipping from **Precision Audio, Inc.** Orders can be placed on our Web site at www.precisionaudio.com, by fax 574-522-1369, or by phone 574-295-7493.

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The Faith of the Outsider: Exclusion and Inclusion in the Biblical Story by Frank Anthony (Eerdmans, 2005, $16) highlights seven biblical stories that treat nonelect people positively and, even more, as strategically important participants in God's plan of salvation.

Anxious Souls Will Ask ... : The Christ-Centered Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer by John W. Matthews (Eerdmans, 2005, $13) shows that the prison reflections of Dietrich Bonhoeffer contain profound inspiration for all who desire to walk more closely with Jesus in today's troubled and often troubling world.

Why Psychology Needs Theology: A Radical-Reformation Perspective, edited by Alvin Dueck and Cameron Lee (Eerdmans, 2005, $24), shows how Christian insights into human nature can be integrated with psychological theory and suggest ways that a basic understanding of faith might positively impact the therapeutic process.

Cents and Sensibility: How Couples Can Agree About Money by Scott and Bethany Palmer (Cook Communications Ministries, 2005, $14.99) addresses money arguments, the number one cause for divorce.

Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views, edited by Myron B. Penner (Brazos Press, 2005, $19.99), involves six contributors who address topics such as the nature of rationality and biblical faith, the relationship of language to reality and truth, ethics, and apologetics/theological method from a variety of positions and in dialogue with each other.

Meeting Islam by George Dardess (Paraclete Press, 2005, $16.95) challenges Christians to understand their Muslim neighbors. Dardess explores some of Islam's key beliefs and practices, using his own failings and successes as a guide.

Judgement Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Laws That Changed America by Nick Kotz (Houghton Mifflin, 2005, $26) focuses on the high-water mark of the civil-rights movement: 1964-65, when much of the legislation that shaped today's society was passed, including the Voting Rights Act, Medicare and Medicaid, among others. This legislation succeeded largely because of the uneasy alliance between Johnson and King, Kotz argues.

Making Your Dreams Your Destiny: A Woman's Guide to Awakening Your Passions and Fulfilling Your Purpose by Judy Rushfeldt (Castle Quay and Augsburg Fortress, 2005, $17.99) helps women uncover their passions and define the barriers that have held them back, providing practical tools for identifying their purpose, expanding their vision and conquering fear.

School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of a New Monasticism, edited by The Rutba House (Wipf and Stock, 2005, $22), is a collection of essays by 14 writers, including four Mennonites, who are following a call to live in communities much like monastic ones.

To Baghdad and Beyond: How I Got Born Again in Babylon by Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (Wipf and Stock, 2005, $16) is the story of a young evangelical couple who followed the conviction of their faith into a war zone and discovered an alternative to the violence of empires and the complicity of quietism in the "third way" of Jesus' beloved community.

Prayer: The Cry of the Kingdom by Stanley J. Grenz (Eerdmans, 2005, $14) is a revised edition that offers practical guidance on praying effectively and challenges the contemporary church to recapture what it means to be a church that prays.

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Medical malpractice litigation

Joseph Kotva

Timothy Jost

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Health-care Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu. Also go to www.anabaptist-ethics.org.

Two months ago, Mrs. Miller went to the hospital to give birth to her first child. Sadly, after a long and difficult delivery, the baby was stillborn. Worse yet, the last-minute cesarean section seriously damaged her uterus, making it unlikely she will ever bear a child again. After reviewing her records, two physicians told Mrs. Miller that her obstetrician was negligent in several respects. Yet three different lawyers have declined to represent her in a malpractice lawsuit. The lawyers say that her state imposes severe "caps" on judgments for "noneconomic" loss. Her injuries—the dead child, loss of reproductive capacity and the severe depression she now suffers—are all "noneconomic," and the amount they could recover under the state's cap will not cover the costs of bringing a long and difficult malpractice suit.

Dr. Yoder has been delivering babies for 30 years. Yesterday he received his malpractice premium bill for next year—$160,000. His premiums have gone up 50 percent over the past three years. He considers himself lucky—some of his colleagues have lost their insurance altogether when their insurer left the state. Nevertheless, he is thinking about retiring early or moving to another state with lower insurance rates. But who will deliver his patients' babies if another obstetrician leaves their area?

Malpractice litigation functions poorly as a system for compensating victims. Few victims collect anything.

After 30 years of controversy, issues surrounding medical malpractice are highly partisan. Trial lawyers and many consumer groups support Democrats, demanding unlimited rights to sue. Medical interests, insurers and other business defendants support Republicans, seeking limitations on lawsuits. As both patients and health-care providers, Mennonites are affected by both malpractice and malpractice litigation. This month's column describes what we know about medical malpractice. Next month's column will discuss what we as Mennonites have to offer in the midst of this complex situation.

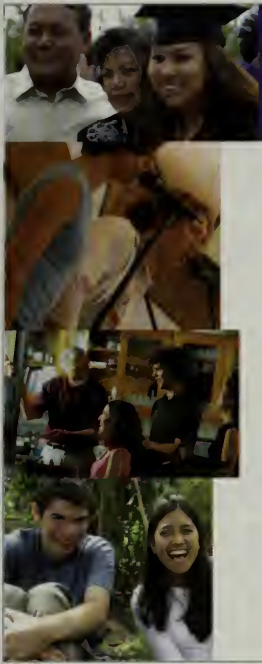
Some facts about malpractice are recognized by most observers. For example, medical injuries are common. The Institute of Medicine estimates that up to 98,000 people die in hospitals each year from medical errors, many more than die from highway accidents or breast cancer. Many errors are preventable, and many result from negligence. The vast majority of victims of medical error do not sue, and fewer than half of litigants recover damages. And, contrary to popular opinion, malpractice premiums account for little of U.S. health-care costs, only 1 to 2 percent.

We also know that malpractice litigation functions poorly as a system for compensating victims. Few victims collect anything. Most of the money paid in premiums goes to lawyers, insurers, experts and others. When damages are awarded, the typical payout comes almost five years after injury. Worse yet, malpractice caps on noneconomic losses, a solution to the malpractice crisis favored by many, is often unfair in that it reduces recoveries most for people with the most serious injuries, as well as for people with primarily noneconomic losses, such as Mrs. Miller or retirees and homemakers. Moreover, while such caps clearly reduce payouts, they reduce the number of lawsuits only marginally.

The system likewise does not work well for the many physicians who pay steep premiums, especially those in high-risk locations and high-risk specialties such as obstetrics. Premiums increased rapidly in the early 2000s in most states. States that have capped damages seem to do better at attracting doctors than those that have not.

Many other contentions are less clear. Lawyers assert that the threat of malpractice suits make physicians more careful and patients safer, but there is no systematic evidence to back up this assertion. Lawyers also say that "individualized justice" best serves injured patients, yet studies find large variations in recovery for similar cases. Recent studies show that malpractice payments have grown only moderately in recent years, at about the rate of growth of medical costs generally, but advocates of malpractice reform contest these studies. Physicians say their legal fears lead to higher costs because they must adopt defensive practices of little benefit to patients. But again there is little evidence that such fears, rather than factors such as economic incentives or patient expectations, actually motivate extra tests. Proponents of tort reform often blame the legal system for sudden premium increases, but insurance market factors also plainly influence those increases.

Surely there is a better way to address malpractice and compensate injured patients. Mennonites do not believe in litigation as a means to settle disputes. Perhaps our experience in peacemaking efforts such as conflict transformation and victim-offender reconciliation can help us find a better way.



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There is time to show the love we're given

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

I stood at the barrier and watched my only daughter walk through the circuitous lines of security at the airport on her way back to her home in London, England. I just wanted to see a last glimpse of her. Already I felt loss and love mixed together like cement, weighing me down. Even my shoulders and heart drooped in unison.

Describing this experience to a friend, I said her mother likely felt the same way when she left to go to voluntary service. "No," Sara said, "Mom was never quick to show her emotions. She rarely told me she loved me, and I hardly ever saw her cry. Actually it was my father who was more emotional."

We pursued the conversation further while I processed this new information in my brain and heart. It was hard for me to imagine not experiencing that cement feeling at the sight of one's daughter leaving for an extended period.

By now I had all sorts of questions. Knowing that Sara cared for her 90-year-old mother in her home made me wonder why she took on such a responsibility for a mother who was so reserved when she was a child. Why would she dress, feed and care for a mother who was emotionally distant? Why would she care enough to answer the same questions over and over again as her mother continually asks them due to her failing memory? Why would she tie herself down to someone who could give so little in return. There was no obvious debt that needed to be repaid. What was Sara receiving from her mother that made her want to give with such love?

Sara told me how life had changed when her mother, Dorothy, moved in. Now Dorothy often tells Sara how much she loves her and appreciates all she does for her. Dorothy can't quite fathom how her daughter could give her such care. Today's experience is the antithesis of the past for Sara, since there are so many ways Dorothy expresses her love.

Consequently it doesn't matter that Dorothy can't fold the laundry anymore and just moves the clothes from one basket to the other. It doesn't matter that she can't remember people's names, no matter how hard she tries. Some days she can't even recall the names of her own children. What matters is that in these final years of Dorothy's life, her daughter is receiving a gift from her that she could have received no other way. Sara feels she has had the opportunity to see a part of her mother she hadn't seen before. Her great sense of humor and her congenial spirit provide the reward of another day.

At times such gifts from God come in the most unexpected way. We may think it should take years of therapy for Sara to be able to manage her feelings about a mother who was emotionally reserved. However, faithfulness on Sara's part made it possible for her to receive the gift of a mother's expressed love late in life. Sara doesn't demand this of her mother or try to find ways to excuse herself from having to care for her mother.

Family relationships are never straightforward and simple. We inherit and perpetuate complicated lives, emotions and histories. At one point in Jesus' life, it seemed even he turned his back on his mother. When his mother and brothers came to see him, he claimed the only family he had were those who do the will of God. That certainly sounds as if he didn't consider his own mother to be such a person (Mark 3:35). And at the wedding at Cana, he called his mother "woman" and told her to back off when she was nagging him to make more wine (John 2:4). However, when he was on the cross, Jesus instructed John to care for his elderly mother, Mary (John 19:26ff). He did not leave her uncared for but gave her another son.

The truth in life is that we don't always show the love we've been given to others around us. And the grace is that there still is time to do that. TM

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Speak to government?

One difference between J. Daryl Byler ("Why Mennonite Church USA Should Speak to Government," Aug. 9) and John D. Roth ("A Deep Pastoral Concern," Aug. 9) is that Roth wants us to sit out the next presidential election. I would like to see who is running before I join the boycott, but yes, I'll consider it.

A bigger difference concerns our calling from God to be "a city on a hill" and "a light to the nations." Roth doesn't include government within that calling, while Byler, relying on Ephesians 3:10, does.

What's scary is where Byler and Roth agree: They both want our congregations to talk more about the everyday meanings of righteousness and justice. Whenever my pastor does that, I tense up. Our times of worship feel most edifying when he sticks to spiritual subjects.—*Berry Friesen, Lancaster, Pa.*

I am under the growing conviction that the church should call a moratorium on government participation not for just five years but forever. As a church we have become so focused on influencing the world from the top down that we have neglected to influence from the bottom up. For example, many Christians are looking to President Bush to stop abortion. But is it really our duty to get laws passed to stop the killing? Christ calls us to get our hands dirty and witness at the individual level. Jesus did not write letters to Caeser telling him what he was doing wrong. He went to the people and witnessed to them at the lowest levels of society, one person at a time. The same can be said about war, homosexuality, environment, poverty and other social injustices.

If we claim to be followers of Jesus, or "little Christs," why don't we influence our communities as Jesus did? Jesus didn't look to the government to change things; he changed things by loving the helpless around him.

The nation isn't our vehicle of witness to the world; our vehicle is our own individual lives, setting an example of Christ's love to all we are in contact with. Let's stop putting so much trust in the government and instead trust God and turn to our neighbors and help them understand and see God in the way we live and reach out to them. The government may or may not witness our efforts, but God will, and God is greater than our nation.—*Brett Klingenberg, Newton, Kan.*

Playing God

I found the column "Killing or Letting Die" (ACHE, Aug. 9) by Joseph Kotva helpful. It reminded me of a case several years ago when I was a pastor. An 85-year-old man was suffering from severe respiratory disease and wasn't expected to live much longer. His family had accepted that fact and were at peace about it. He then suffered a stroke. He was taken to surgery to deal with it, which was the normal procedure at that time. He revived, was put on life support and lived a little over two weeks. But it was torture, as he had to gasp for every breath. He often pleaded, "I wish I could die," and his wife said several times, "Why can't they let him die?"

Without advance directives—which were hardly known at that time—the medical staff was obligated do what they did. Fortunately, now one's wishes can made known to both family and medical personnel.

It has been said that pulling the tube is playing God. As Kotva implies, putting the tube in may also be playing God. I know there are no simple answers, but I hope that article will encourage families to discuss the issues it raises so one's wishes can be made known to both family members and medical personnel.—*Verney Unruh, North Newton, Kan.*

Photo inappropriate

Cousin Anne Siegrist did a nice piece on my father, Melvin Hertzler ("An Act of Grace," Aug 23). But my wife and I were surprised to see it illustrated with a stock photo, "Man with Dog."

A stock photo has its place, but from here it does not seem appropriate to illustrate the profile of an actual person. Although he died in 1964, there are surely other readers who remember him and are puzzled by the strange visage.—*Daniel Hertzler, Scottdale, Pa.*

IN THIS ISSUE

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast just as we began working on this issue. We changed some of our plans and pursued stories, recognizing that with events changing day by day, whatever we print will feel dated by the time this issue is printed. What some are calling the biggest natural disaster in U.S. history affected many congregations in the Gulf States Mennonite Conference (page 19). While many Mennonites are already helping and many more want to help, we encourage looking to Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service for guidance (page 21). This issue also features two articles on male spirituality. Alan Kreider writes that we all benefit when men learn to talk about how they pray and experience God (page 8). David Boshart writes that the church today "does not know how to invite a man to know and live from his deep heart" (page 11). At this summer's Mennonite Church USA convention in Charlotte, N.C., Brenda Martin Hurst led a seminar for women that invited them to talk about pornography. See their comments on this important issue (page 14).—*Editors*

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Need for discernment continues
Thank God for Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. But the need for discernment continues—whether it's our confession or the Old Testament holiness code in Leviticus. Had the Israelite community taken the holiness code literally, they would have stoned kings David and Solomon to death for the sin of adultery.—*Muriel T. Stackley, Kansas City, Kan.*

On lifting the moratorium
While I value dialogue, I am reluctant to conclude that a moratorium on "homosexuality" in *The Mennonite* significantly hinders our ability for continuing dialogue about human sexuality. On this issue, face-to-face dialogue in the context of the church community seems best. If we are not doing that, all the articles in the world won't matter. I don't see the moratorium as saying we shouldn't talk about human sexuality but that this is not the best forum. People often talk past one another in attempts to get their "truth" out there. It is impossible, through Readers Say and one-way speaking, to have the kind of dialogue required for reconciliation. Jesus encouraged people to get together face-to-face and work it out.—*Michael Danner, Metamora, Ill.*

Mennonites could be light on a hill
Re the letters from James L. Thomas and "Name Withheld by Request" (Readers Say, Aug. 23) on the subject of the moratorium on discussing gays in our midst. My question to Mennonite Church USA is, Has the moratorium caused the issue to solve itself?

In the 1500s, if Conrad Grebel, Hans Denck and the rest of those first-generation Anabaptists had followed the church ban on discussing "Radical Reformation," would that have created what we now know as our part of the peace church movement?

Our leadership—much sought after then and now by so many denominations in the areas of adult baptism, Communion, separation of church and state and pacifism—may well have never come to pass if those early radical reformers had just kept quiet.

Our time is come again. If we throw off the chains of the fundamentalist/modernist controversy, Mennonites could be a light on the hill for our sisters and brothers throughout this country on how to follow Jesus on this issue. But we must find a way to start the discussion among ourselves. The painful and fractious discussion is in our future, regardless of when we decide to dig in.—*Jim Compton-Schmidt, Fresno, Calif.*

Bruce Leichty responds
Contrary to the implication of the letters printed in your July 5 issue, the forum "Now Speak With Boldness" (held in Charlotte July 7) was not an event endorsing anti-semitism, white supremacy or far-right ideology. It is also false to say that the sponsor's Web site, www.goodinformation.org, deserves such labels.

This "Un-Convention" was a chance to hear firsthand from several Mennonite-related individuals who make controversial historical, theological and sociopolitical assertions. Good Information Advocates sought to appeal to some basic Mennonite instincts that have long been channeled in other, officially approved directions, including appreciation for the right of dissent.

The featured speakers told their stories of government persecution and misconduct and spoke boldly but sensitively about false Judaic religion, freemasonry and the spiritual struggle taking place in our world.

A forum provides an opportunity for dialogue. A few of us had some dialogue, but as the convener, I wish more Mennonites had come and heard for themselves before judging. That would have been consistent with the "best behavior reminders" posted at the anti-racism workshop I attended at the Mennonite Church USA convention the next day.
—*Bruce Leichty, Fresno, Calif.*

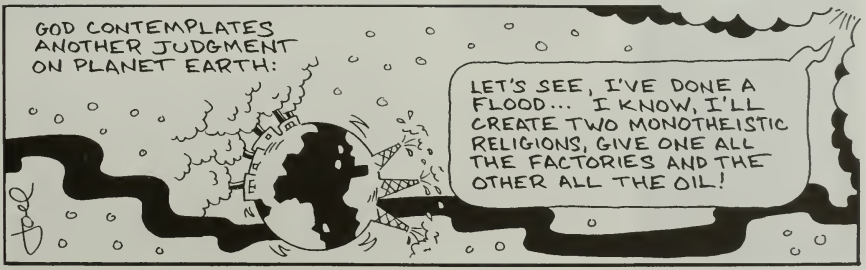
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Masculine spirituality is

- ○ an important topic for men (8%)
- ○ an important topic for men and women (70%)
- ○ not important (11%)
- ○ not sure (11%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


GOD CONTEMPLATES ANOTHER JUDGMENT ON PLANET EARTH:
LET'S SEE, I'VE DONE A FLOOD... I KNOW, I'LL CREATE TWO MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS, GIVE ONE ALL THE FACTORIES AND THE OTHER ALL THE OIL!
Joel

IN BRIEF

Blufton offers classes for retirees

The Institute for Learning in Retirement at Bluffton (Ohio) University is offering eight classes for senior citizens in its fall session, Sept. 26-Nov. 17. These include Monday Morning at the Movies; Harry S. Truman: The Man, the President, and the Shaping of the Post-War World; Sports in America; Colloquium; Art of the Late 18th and 19th Centuries: The Modern World Begins; Life in the United States (1925-2004) as Seen Through the Eyes of "New Yorker" Cartoonists; Mythology; and Religious Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices.—*Bluffton University*

Giving to AMBS highest ever

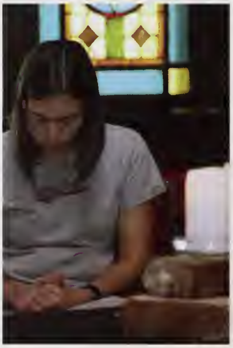
Giving to the annual fund at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., during June was almost $500,000, the highest it has ever been in the last month of the fiscal year. During 2004–2005, total giving to the AMBS annual fund reached a record high of $1.6 million, up from $1.58 million in 2003–2004 and $1.59 million in each of the previous two years. AMBS also was able to add more than $1 million to its endowment as a result of designated gifts for special funds.—*AMBS*

Mennonite colleges respond to Katrina

Mennonite individuals and institutions are helping those affected by Hurricane Katrina in many ways. Others have needs because of the disaster:

- Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., has agreed to admit up to 20 displaced students to study at EMU for the cost of room and board for as long as their home campus is closed.
- Goshen (Ind.) College is organizing a service trip for students to do cleanup in hurricane-devastated areas through Mennonite Disaster Service Dec. 13-22 and will welcome students academically displaced by Hurricane Katrina for the cost of board, waiving tuition and room costs for this academic year.
- Hurricane Katrina was the main discussion topic Aug. 30 during the weekly Introduction to Disaster Management class at Hesston (Kan.) College. Russ Gaeddert, Disaster Management program director and instructor, taught the 18 students about the disaster management cycle—preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.
- Bluffton (Ohio) University is offering a full-tuition waiver, with room/board/fees at the regular rate for university or college students displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Robin Bowlus



Vada Snider

Students at Bluffton University (above) and Bethel College (left) pray for those displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

- Faculty, staff and students at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., formed the Bethel Emergency Response Team, which raised about $3,000 by Sept. 9 for hurricane relief.

Pastor Quang released from Vietnam prison

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam—Nguyen Hong Quang, the Mennonite pastor imprisoned in Vietnam since his arrest on June 8, 2004, was released on Aug. 30.

Evangelist Pham Ngoc Thach is now the only one of the six Mennonite church leaders arrested since March 2004 still being held in prison.

At a November 2004 trial by the People's Court on charges relating to resisting officers of law, the six were given sentences ranging from a few months to three years. Ms. Le Thi Hong Lien, a children's teacher and the only woman in the group, was released in April after serving 10 months of her one-year sentence. Three others had been released earlier.

In April, the Supreme People's Court dismissed the appeals of Quang and Thach and upheld their original sentences of three and two years, respectively.

During the past 14 months, Quang has been moved about among five different prisons. His health was seriously affected by harsh conditions, hard labor and beatings by criminals in the prisons. His Bible was confiscated, he was forbidden to pray for other prisoners and disciplined for preaching to them.

Mennonites in Vietnam believe Quang's early release is the result of the great concern expressed by many governments, human rights agencies, international press coverage and evangelical believers within and beyond Mennonite circles.—*Mennonite World Conference*

Congregations in secular university settings

Congregations that witness to Mennonite students at secular universities and draw members from university faculty and staff face a unique set of challenges and are ideally located to influence a new generation of leaders.

More than 20 representatives of such congregations from 11 states and one Canadian province met in Charlotte, N.C., in early July to consider how congregations can best relate to nearby secular campuses and how Mennonite Education Agency can help. The congregations agreed to share ideas through Anabaptist Congregations in Secular Education Settings.

ACSES is based on email and Web interaction and headed by a volunteer committee of Marj Rush Hovde of Lafayette (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship; David Miller, pastor of University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa.; James Rosenberger, secretary of the MEA Board of Directors and head of the Department of Statistics at The Pennsylvania State University; and Thomas Lehman, member of

Jenna Stoltzfus

chool kits arrive in Nicaragua

oiterine Dayana (left) and Sugeyling Tatiana Zetino, students t a Brethren in Christ elementary school in Managua, icaragua, receive school kits from Mennonite Central Commit-ee. Last year, MCC provided 7,749 school kits in Nicaragua and 0,798 school kits in 13 countries around the world. —*MCC*

Chapel Hill Mennonite Fellowship and of the executive staff of the University of North Carolina Mathematics Department. MEA associate director Cheryl Zehr Walker staffs the effort.

ACSES welcomes participation by other congregations with nearby secular universities. Contact Walker at cherylzw@MennoniteEducation.org or go to www.MennoniteEducation.org.—*MEA*

CPT Canada reopens Kenora project

TORONTO—Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Canada will be sending a team to Kenora, Ont., for two months, beginning Oct. 17, to continue a community-organizing project focused on reducing the racist treatment of Anishinaabe people in Kenora.

Aboriginal people who live in or visit Kenora routinely experience stereotyping and mistreatment when they shop, attend school or seek health care there. Some report that the Kenora Police Services abuse and harass them and ignore their complaints. On any given day, 90 percent of the people in the municipal jail are aboriginal. Currently no aboriginal people serve on the police force or the KPS Board.

The unsolved murder of an Anishinaabe man named Max Kakagemic, 28, is an example of systemic racism in the community. In Oct. 4, 2000, Kakagemic was killed by a blow to the neck and his body left under a mural honoring Aboriginal culture. The KPS subsequently charged Kenora resident Justin Carembetsos with manslaughter.

Mired in procedural delays, the case did not appear before the provincial court until the winter of 2004. In March 2004, the court dismissed the charges against Carembetsos as a consequence of serious police misconduct.

Investigating officers lied to the court and suppressed evidence that a relative of one of the officers was seen near Kakegamic's body. Two Kenora officers face disciplinary hearings under the Ontario Police Services Act. Meanwhile, options for criminal proceedings appear to be exhausted (Carambetsos cannot be charged again), thus denying the Kakegamic family closure in the case.

CPT concluded its full-time presence in the community in June after moving to Kenora from Asubpeeschoseewagong in August 2004.—*CPT*

Hesston instructor in latest Chicken Soup

HESSTON, Kan.—The latest edition of *Chicken Soup for the Soul* includes a story by Palmer Becker, Bible instructor and director of the Pastoral Ministries program at Hesston College.

Becker's story, "I Was Ready to Fight," is one of 101 stories in the 101st edition of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, subtitled *Stories for a Better World*. The series has sold more than 85 million books in 35 languages around the world.

In his story, Becker retells how he spent nearly five years in Taiwan (1958-63) working in alternative service as a conscientious objector because of his religious beliefs. "I was involved in a mobile clinic, along with radio and literature work," he says. "My service was recognized by officers of the U.S. military, by officials from a Chinese government owned and operated radio network, and by a U.S. Senator as an effective way of overcoming an oppressive force."—*Hesston College*

Suderman new MC Canada general secretary

WINNIPEG—The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada has announced the appointment of Robert J. (Jack) Suderman to the post of general secretary. He succeeds Dan Nighswander, who has served in the post since 1999. He officially begins Dec. 1.

Robert Suderman

Suderman has served the Mennonite Church in Canada since 1996, most recently as executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, the mission and outreach ministry of the national church. He has nine years of experience at the executive leadership level and played a key role in the transformation process of the former binational General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church to Mennonite Church Canada.—*Mennonite Church Canada*

—*compiled by Gordon Houser*

IN BRIEF

Mission workers help produce book

Power & Providence: Studies on the Book of Esther, published by the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland, concludes a yearlong mission assignment through Mennonite Mission Network for Derek Keefe, who served as a research assistant at the center, and Sherrill, his wife, who coordinated seminars for the center. According to Keefe, the situation of the post-exilic Jews living in ancient Persia is relevant for modern European Christians who find themselves having less and less influence in an increasingly indifferent culture. The Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland offers biblical resources and practical support for the development of biblical faith for a changing world. —*Mennonite Mission Network*

U.S. poverty rate keeps rising

Total number of people living in poverty in the U.S.: 37 million. Number of children living in poverty: 13 million. Number of people who fell below the poverty threshold between 2003 and 2004: 1.1 million. Number of consecutive years in which the poverty rate has risen in America: 4.—*U.S. Census Bureau*

Masculine spirituality

Four crucial areas for being a Christian male

by Alan Kreider

How does our gender as men impact our experiences and expressions of spirituality? At a forum in January at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., I and two other men talked about this. We said things that overlapped but other things that demonstrated experiences vary markedly from man to man. What follows is what I said, and it is personal. It reflects my life and personality. I cannot generalize about masculine spirituality. But as others add their stories to mine, a more universal picture will emerge from which we all will benefit.

My experience is unusual. Over the years I've lived in several cultures—four years as a teenager in Japan; my main productive years, 30 in all, in England; and 28 years of childhood, early adulthood and now my mature years in the United States. In each of these cultures I have discovered that culturally acceptable masculinity takes different forms. English men are different from American men, and in England how you express masculinity depends on your social class.

Five years ago I moved from England to the United States and had to discover what it is to be an American male. I know it's important for me to take American expressions of masculinity seriously. I've spent 30 years as a missionary, and a missionary assumes there are aspects of every culture that are good as well as problematic. As one writer put it, in every culture some things are "graced" as well as "disgraced."

What are the graced aspects of American masculinity? God loves American males, and I want to love them, too, and fit into this culture. But I still haven't figured out what it means in various American cultures to be masculine, a guy. I write about myself as a particular man who has questions and who wants in my masculinity to experience and reflect God. Four areas are crucial for me as a Christian male.

I write about myself as a particular man who has questions and who wants in my masculinity to experience and reflect God.

Work: As a male I work. Work is important to me, spiritually important. At times I experience it as drudgery, but I love to work and have experienced God as I work. "The surest indication of the presence of God is joy," wrote Léon Blois, rephrasing Psalm 16:11. I agree with this. I have experienced joy in work: when I teach; when I speak and preach; when I interact and correspond with people and sense authentic communication happening and new insights emerging; when I do research and find something opaque clarifying.

Work is an important part of a masculine spirituality, and I believe God is honored in this. I believe—using my joy meter—that I have encountered God in my work.

But a danger hovers over me as I work—overwork. Work can so easily become an end in itself, an idol. At times work has become this for me. The drive to finish things, do too many things or do things too well has at times led me to work too much, be obsessive, perfectionist, joyless. Therefore, for me as a Christian male, rest is important—if God needed the seventh day, don't I? I have discovered I need a rhythm of work and rest, with joy in both. The Sabbath is as important as work—a day to worship, pray, play, be conscious of God's presence and smile as I do things intentionally rather than goal-oriented. As someone who finds joy in work, I need regularly to engage joyfully in intentional worklessness.

Fathers and sons: I am a son of a wonderful father, a gifted, powerful man; I am the father of a wonderful, gifted son in whom I delight. I believe the transmission of blessing from fathers to sons to their sons from generation to generation is vital for our wholeness as men. I know it is vital for my spirituality as a man. I have struggled in this area. A wise nun, my spiritual director, once guided me over a period of some weeks to ponder my images of God. I was amazed to see how these were related to my experiences with my father.

I am a son. As time has gone by, I've come to see that I am also a father, not only of our son Andrew but of other people. One of my joys happens every year at Christmas time—getting letters and emails from people I have, in a sense, fathered. All men are sons; many men will know their fathers; some will receive blessing from their fathers, and some will not. The struggle for a father's blessing runs throughout the Bible; think of Esau's anguished cry, "Bless me, me also, father!" (Genesis 27:38). It also runs through our human experience.

This is one reason I continue to address God as Father. This is important in my private prayer, and I suspect it may be for other men. How about the church's public prayer? I know that in some circles Father language for God has seemed oppressively exclusive. For example, praying exclusively to "Father-God" does not do justice to the range of biblical images for God. I want to be in a church that addresses a God who transcends gender in many ways. Yet I believe it is vital for the church to pray "Our Father" in the Lord's Prayer and use Father language or imagery in its public prayer. I think we men need this. I know I do.

None of us Christian men, not even the most gifted among us at fathering, can adequately bless our sons. Only God can do that. Not all men will have genetic sons, but all men, single as well as married, can be mentors or spiritual fathers and can know the joy of passing on the blessing. This experience of being fathered and fathering is profound. I don't understand it fully, but I know how potent it has been in my prayer and my understanding of God.

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Trusting God in areas of weakness: Some years ago I read Isobel Briggs Myers' book *Gifts Differing* (1980). In it I learned there is no one of my personality type in the Philadelphia Police Department. I probably would be an unsuccessful police officer. I have my own strengths and weaknesses, my preferences and areas of insecurity and dread. Over the years, spiritual mentors and friends—backed up by reading—have taught me that to grow spiritually I must enter and explore areas where I'm not strong, areas of fear and inadequacy. Some spiritual writers call this area "the shadow." The shadow represents areas of my life in which I can't control things, areas in which I must trust God for provision. Other men, with different strengths, will have different areas of weakness, different shadows. I know that I meet God when I trustingly go into my own shadow in two areas:

Thinking: I need to stop to think, to apply my mind to a situation. It helps me to think by keeping a journal in which I ponder my life, try to get perspective on it and do something that keeps me

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from forgetting the blessings and serendipities that are God's gifts to me (Psalm 103:2). Thinking helps me pray by getting me out of my muddle of feelings and intuitions.

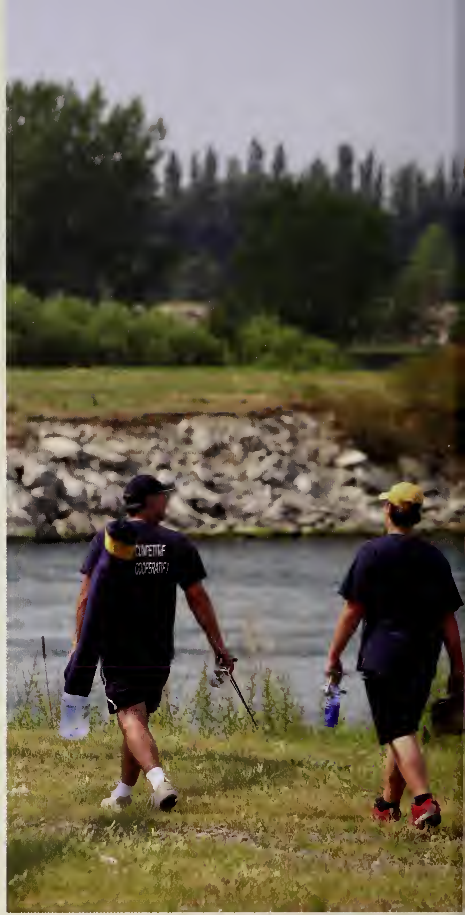
The tactile: I need to touch things, see things, feel things and do things with my body; when I do so I believe I have encountered God. In my spirituality listening to music is a daily discipline; I keep a diary of the music I listen to. Walking is also important—walking to work or for pleasure, enjoying the stride of my legs, allowing my mind to rove but also looking at things. In yesterday morning's walk I saw two cardinals, brilliant against the blue sky. I love to walk in nature and photograph it. A life principle for me is, whenever possible, walk. Last summer, my most powerful experience of God was walking along Lake Michigan, day by day, hour by hour, praying Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I am content; he makes me walk by the still waters; he restores my soul." While walking I have had some of my most important times of hearing God; I get new perspectives on people and situations; new ideas come as well. While I am walking, the ideas arrive obliquely; they come by surprise. The tactile—the artistic, walking, natural dimension of life—gives me joy. God is there.

All of us—not only men but the entire Christian community—benefit when we men learn to talk about how we pray and experience God.

Friendship: I have discovered that for me, as a man, friendship with other men is important. Like many men, I have a wife who is my closest friend; she is my delight, and we share many interests and enjoy working together. But I know that I need other people, in my experience, especially men with whom I can share transparency, struggle and joys. With a few men I exchange emails; I go out for breakfast or lunch; I engage in truthful talk about their spiritual walk and mine. They help me see myself in new ways; they report what they are learning, from which I can learn. I pray for them, and they pray for me. These spiritual friends do not necessarily replace the spiritual directors I've had in the past, but I know how important they are to my spirituality. God has graced my life with friends.

Other areas are important to my spirituality:

- prayer upon awaking, asking Jesus that I may follow him throughout the day;
- the daily discipline of reading the Bible and praying with my wife;
- the weekly gift of worship with my congregation;
- my experience over many years (though not, alas, at the moment) of working with and for the local poor.



All these give joy, and I experience them as a man. They may be less characteristically masculine than the four areas I have mentioned.

What I do know is that it's important to me—and I believe to other men—to be able to talk about our struggles and joys. It excited me to see, in our discussion at AMBS, that many people were encouraging us men to do this. Both men and women know that spirituality is important for male Christians. They know that we men don't often talk about this. They sense that all of us—not only men but the entire Christian community—benefit when we men learn to talk about how we pray and experience God. As we "seek God's face" (Psalm 27.8), we need each other's help.

Alan Kreider teaches church history and mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

On men searching *for God*

Men learning to live from their deep heart

by David Boshart

In his popular book *Wild at Heart*, John Eldgredge writes: "Society at large can't make up its mind about men. Having spent the last 30 years redefining masculinity into something more sensitive, safe, manageable and, well, feminine, it now berates men for not being men."

When certain parts of the feminist movement named men the adversary, the message was often broadcast that there is something wrong with men. A recent book by Paul Nathanson and Katherine Young subtitled "The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture" talks about how recent images of men in the media have impacted male identity in the last 30 or 40 years. In this book the writers make an important observation: "It's become blithely accepted, and nobody feels slighted by Archie Bunker or Homer Simpson or Dagwood Bumstead. In these three cases, the male character is, respectively, a bigot, an ignoramus and a layabout. As well, all are attended by a sweet, long-suffering, tolerant and ultimately wise wife." In today's culture, if those roles were reversed, there would be public outrage.

The National Fatherhood Initiative did a study of popular prime-time TV programs in 1998. The study examined how men and particularly fathers are portrayed during the prime-time viewing hours when 40 million children are watching. They discovered some important themes:

- Of the 102 prime-time network TV shows (excluding news, sports and local programming) only 15 (14.7 percent) feature a father as a recurring, central character.
- The majority of fathers are portrayed as uninvolved, incompetent or both.
- Of the 15 network TV shows with a father as the central character, only 40 percent portrayed competent fathers.

The study further showed that the more involved a father is, the more likely he is portrayed as incompetent. Conversely, the dads portrayed as intelligent and able men

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The church does not know how to invite a man to know and live from his deep heart.

Continued from page 11

are often the ones least involved with their children. We can ask, How do these powerful projections shape the identity of men. Men are routinely portrayed by the Tim Taylors of the TV screen as insensitive, deaf and relationally incompetent.

Yet another national study found that the qualities men across the board sought in a romantic relationship were—in this order—communication, trust, honesty, compatibility, flexibility and compromise, love and sex, spending time together, mutual respect, support, understanding and shared values and goals. Interestingly, they were the same things women say they look for in a romantic relationship.

John Eldredge goes on to talk about what Christianity, as it currently exists, has done to men. "Walk into any church in America," he writes, "look around and ask yourself this question: What is a Christian man? There is no doubt about it. You'd have to conclude a Christian man is … bored." At a retreat Eldredge tells of listening to a man in his 50s who said, 'I've pretty much tried for the last 20 years to be a good man as the church defines it.' Intrigued, I asked him to say what he thought that was. The man paused for a long moment. 'Dutiful,' he said, 'and separated from my heart.' "

Young men today desperately need time sitting with elders who can guide them to know their hearts.

As one who came of age in the wake of the feminist movement, my experience is that the church does not know how to invite a man to know and live from his deep heart. Perhaps in the male-only leadership paradigm of previous generations the church did not need to articulate the content of male spirituality. The church's gradual openness to women in leadership was born of argument and debate, which became fertile ground for an articulation of the content of feminine spirituality. Perhaps it is now time in the church to give attention to a more careful and conscious understanding of male spirituality that is understood more in terms of partnership than competition.

In the church we have not spent enough time with the biblical epic that shows us men living from their deep heart. Perhaps we are embarrassed by the stories of men who have abused power or too often were unable to choose virtue over self-interest or lust. Or perhaps it is because we are still apologizing for a book in which women are not as prominent in the story line or too often highlighted in Bible studies as an afterthought. Sadly our apologies can also mean that we do not allow ourselves to sink into the deep heart stories showing us what male spirituality looks like.

This epic tells us of Jacob, who was willing to work for 20 years as an indentured servant in order to win the love of his life. We learn of David, who didn't do everything right, was not always dutiful. But think of David standing before Jonathan, naked as an expression of his vulnerability before his best friend. Think of David dancing with abandon to the embarrassment of his wife. Rather than be shamed, David responds: "But I was dancing before the Lord—if I humiliated myself today I was humiliating myself before the Lord and if I choose to do so I will become even more undignified before the Lord." When was the last time you heard a man sing from the depths of his heart: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you, My soul thirsts for you my body longs for you in a dry and weary land where there is no water." When was the last time we heard a man's prayers to God ushered forth from that kind of depth in his heart?

One of the great stories of male spirituality is seen in the struggle between Jacob and the representative of God. It is a struggle for significance, a struggle toward legacy. Out of this ancient story we find every man's struggle—if he looks deep in his heart—a struggle for significance in a world that tells a man his life and what his life produces will never measure up.

Have we in the church demonstrated to men that they are needed and that the church needs men to live from their deep heart? Has the church explained to women that men need to be needed and need to live from their deep heart? In one of the most scandalous sermons I preached in the last couple of years, I said that men need to be needed. But the message that has been booming out to men for the past generation is that men are not needed. Think of the importance the Old Testament places on a man's ability to create progeny. For Abraham, producing a child was the measure of his wealth, the sign of a fulfilled promise, the physical sign of God's blessing. Today a man's physical presence isn't even required at conception.

Men have been socialized for thousands of years to believe that being a man means doing what is needed—providing what is needed. In recent years, our culture has said, "Women are capable of doing everything that a man does." It has been interesting to me to notice that with the involvement of women in leadership in the church—something I wholeheartedly affirm—another transition has also been occurring.

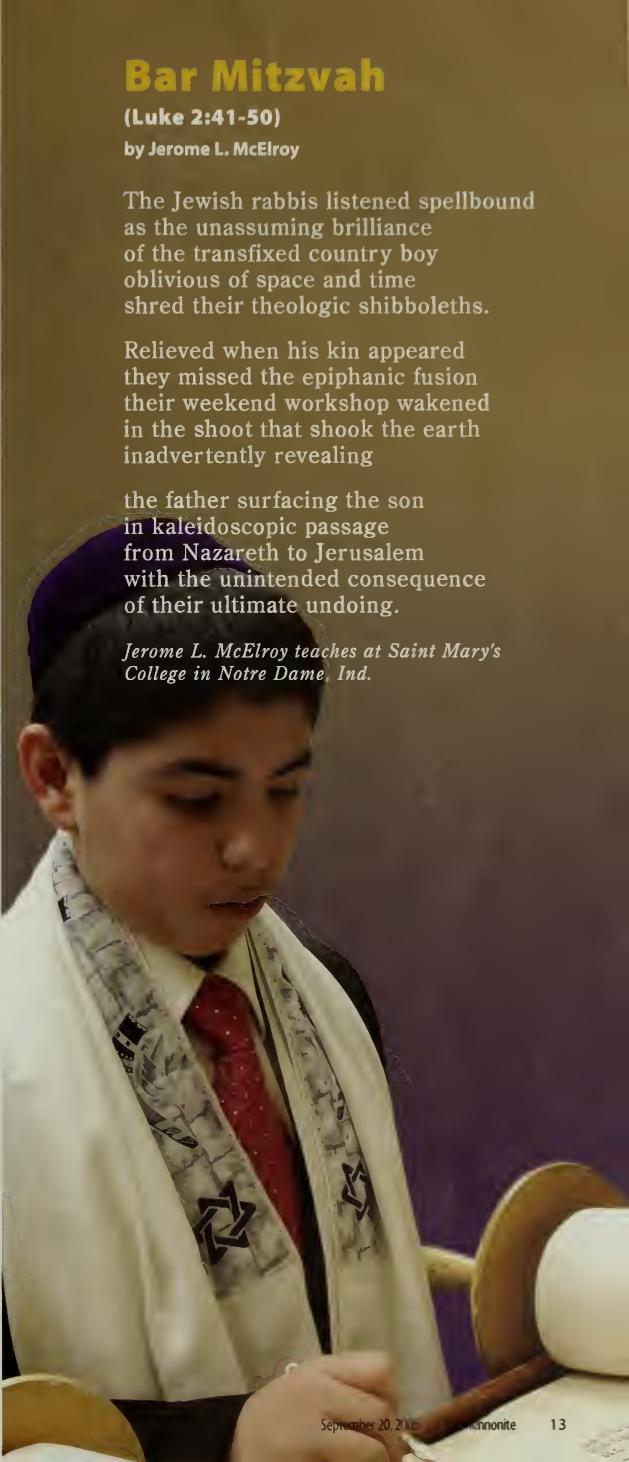
When the message to men is that they are not needed to lead, they stop leading. They figure, If I'm not needed here, I better go look for where I am needed. Sometimes that leads men completely away from the church.

As one who came of age in the wake of the feminist movement, I am keenly aware that something dramatic has changed in the way men pursue their spiritual journey. I have experienced it largely as the absence of guides.

In his book *Sibling Society*, Robert Bly writes: "What is asked of [adult men] now is that they stop moving forward—to retirement, Boca Raton, fortune—and to turn and face the young man. One can imagine a field with the adolescent on one side of a line drawn on the earth and the adults on the other side looking into their eyes. … If the adults do not turn and walk up to this line and help pull the adolescents over, the adolescents will stay exactly where they are for another 20 or 30 years. If we don't turn and face the young ones, their detachment machines, which are louder and more persistent than ours, will say, 'I am not a part of this family,' and they will kill any real relationship with their [elders]."

I have to suspect that for men today learning to live out of one's deep heart will likely not happen because of discussion in Sunday school or Bible study, though that can be an important place to begin the conversation. Men will learn to live out of their deep hearts when they have guides to show them how. Young men today desperately need time sitting with elders who can guide them to know their hearts. A man is never too old to bless a young man by looking him in the eye and extending his hand in blessing and welcoming him to live from his deep heart.

David Boshart is pastor of West Union Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.



iStockphoto

Bar Mitzvah

(Luke 2:41-50)

by Jerome L. McElroy

The Jewish rabbis listened spellbound
as the unassuming brilliance
of the transfixed country boy
oblivious of space and time
shred their theologic shibboleths.

Relieved when his kin appeared
they missed the epiphanic fusion
their weekend workshop wakened
in the shoot that shook the earth
inadvertently revealing

the father surfacing the son
in kaleidoscopic passage
from Nazareth to Jerusalem
with the unintended consequence
of their ultimate undoing.

Jerome L. McElroy teaches at Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind.

Naming por

by Brenda Martin Hurst, with seminar participants

She spoke quietly and timidly at first. Never before had she named openly her husband's struggle with pornography. Neither had she put into words her own shame, fear and distrust. "When he is in bed with me, I wonder what is on his mind. I don't trust his touches to be genuine expressions of love for me." She identified the courage it takes to stand up for herself and for what she really believes about pornography.

Another young woman spoke honestly about her own battle with an attraction to pornographic images. "I am embarrassed and ashamed by my struggle with pornography, which I have wrestled with since I discovered my older brother's collection at age 10."

Another said, "I feel peer pressure from friends outside and inside the church to use pornography to enhance my sex life."

I am infuriated by how pornography devalues women and makes me feel unattractive and undesirable. —seminar participant

Mennonite women participating in a seminar titled "Women Addressing Pornography" at the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Charlotte, N.C., July 4-9, honestly named how pornography has made an impact in our lives, our relationships or our communities. Approximately 75 women came to this setting, where we could share our insights and wisdom about pornography. We talked about how our Christian faith informs our responses to pornography. We also explored what concrete, positive steps we could take to address this issue in our congregations, conferences and denomination.

Writing an article to share our wisdom and insights about pornography with the wider church was one concrete action proposed in the seminar. I hope this article sparks more open and honest discussion in our congregations, conferences and denomination about the significant, negative impact pornography is having in all our lives. Mennonite women can't keep quiet about the negative impact of pornography, and neither should Mennonite Church USA.

Here are more of the ways we named the impact of pornography in our lives:

"My adult son has talked with me about his attraction to pornography … and I'm not sure how concerned to be about this or how best to support him."

"I know pornography is like a magnet to my husband and son. I am angered by it and want to protect them from it."

"I have a son-in-law who is addicted to porn."

"I have struggled much with my husband's addiction to pornography. He has shared with me, and God has given me compassion for him, even though he is not always successful in resisting it."

"I am infuriated by how pornography devalues women and makes me feel unattractive and undesirable."

"Because of having a father who was 'into' pornography, I am sensitive to having any kind of porn around my family, my friends and my boys."

"I know pornography is evident in my community/school, but I feel ignorant and naïve when it comes to recognizing it or responding to it. What is healthy admiration for the beautiful bodies God created, and when does it become pornographic?"

"My husband struggles with an attraction to pornography and I am offended by it and feel shamed and angered by the view of women this behavior reflects."

After articulating the ways pornography touches our lives, we identified the resources from our faith that inform our responses to pornography. We spoke about trusted Christian friends, the power of prayer, God's healing work of forgiveness, helpful Christian books and more.

"Counselors, trusted female friends and books showed me that my use of pornography was one of the many ways I attempted to control and self-medicate my pain."

"My faith told me that my husband's use of pornography was wrong and that I did not need to accept it."

Several women shared the biblical teachings

Mennonite women speak out about pornography

that inform their responses. "I believe the Bible teaches that women and men are equally created in the image of God. We need to teach girls and boys growing up in our churches that they are created in the image of God and therefore deserve honor and respect."

Romans 12:9, 21 informs us that we need to overcome the evil of pornography with good, i.e. genuine love and honor for one another.

Jesus' promise in John 10:10 to give us abundant life applies to our sexual lives as well. Through pornography, the evil one distorts, destroys and deceives regarding what is abundant, life-giving sexuality.

Embracing the biblical metaphor of our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), followers of Jesus can find his actions in clearing the temple instructive.

Jesus would be passionate about driving out all the robbers exploiting our bodies for financial gain. We can likewise zealously respond to pornography to reclaim our bodies and our human sexuality for their God-intended good purposes.

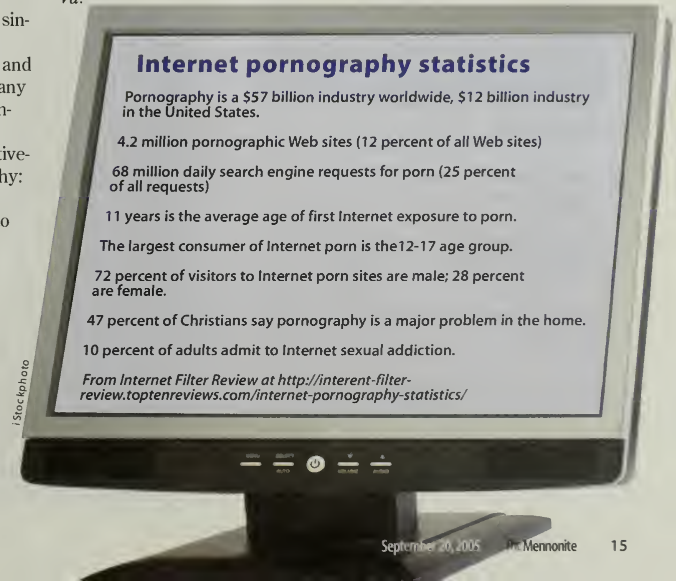
Jesus clearly taught that lustful looking is as sinful as committing adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). Looking at pornography is adulterous behavior and violates both the people looked at lustfully and any spouses or children to which one has made commitments.

We proposed these concrete actions for positively addressing the negative impact of pornography:

- Start accountability partnerships between Christian women struggling with an attraction to pornography.
- Install filters against pornography in our homes and on all office computers in our churches, denominational offices, Mennonite colleges and mission boards.
- Offer a Sunday school class to address pornography and to discern appropriate Christian responses to its impact.
- Promote modest dress for women and men, boys and girls.
- Create a Sunday morning worship time for dealing with pornography's impact: naming, lamenting, addressing, discerning.
- Create Sunday school materials for children on sexuality and pornography.
- Teach parents how to openly talk with their children about sexuality and pornography.
- Call on Mennonite Church USA to take a bold stand against pornography.
- Call the denomination to begin work on a new sexuality study and statement for the 21st century addressing the new context created by the Internet, instant messaging and chat rooms since the 1983 statement was written.
- Articulate and write a healthy, positive theology of sexuality from a Mennonite perspective so that our denomination's response to pornography is grounded in a solid prosexuality position and not a sex-negative one.

We encourage every congregation to provide a setting to honestly discuss the impact of pornography in our lives and our world and to discern what constructive actions to take against this destructive power.

Brenda Martin Hurst is assistant professor of practical theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va.



iStockphoto

Internet pornography statistics

Pornography is a $57 billion industry worldwide, $12 billion industry in the United States.

4.2 million pornographic Web sites (12 percent of all Web sites)

68 million daily search engine requests for porn (25 percent of all requests)

11 years is the average age of first Internet exposure to porn.

The largest consumer of Internet porn is the12-17 age group.

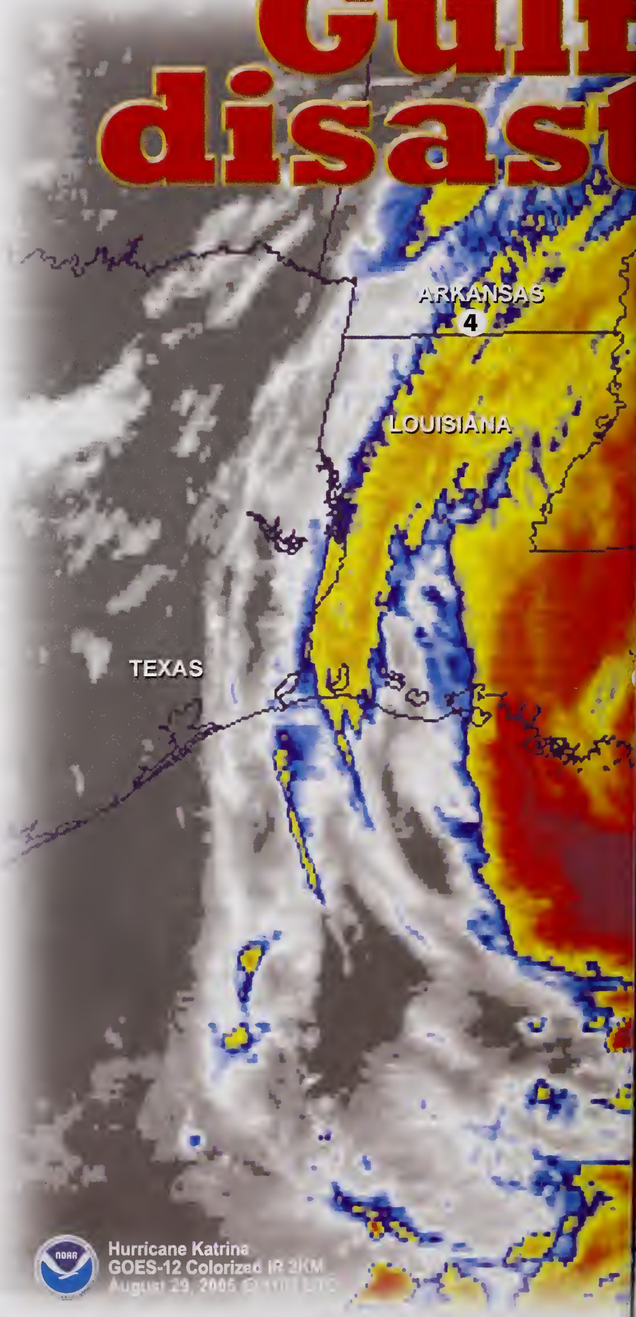
72 percent of visitors to Internet porn sites are male; 28 percent are female.

47 percent of Christians say pornography is a major problem in the home.

10 percent of adults admit to Internet sexual addiction.

From Internet Filter Review at http://interent-filter-review.toptenreviews.com/internet-pornography-statistics/

Gulf disast



Gulf States Mennonite Conference congregations

1. **Choctaw Christian Church**
   Louisville, Miss.

2. **Cornerstone Community Church**
   Macon, Miss.

3. **Des Allemands Mennonite Church**
   Des Allemands, La.

4. **First Mennonite Church**
   El Dorado, Ark.

5. **Grace Mennonite Christian Fellowship**
   Quitman, Miss.

6. **Gulfhaven Mennonite Church**
   Gulfport, Miss.

7. **Iglesia Amor Viviente**
   Metairie, La.

8. **Jubilee Mennonite Church**
   Meridian, Miss.

9. **Lighthouse Fellowship Church**
   Buras, La.

10. **Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church**
    Philadelphia, Miss.

11. **Native Christian Fellowship**
    Atmore, Ala.

12. **Open Door Mennonite Church**
    Jackson, Miss.

13. **Pearl River Mennonite Church**
    Philadelphia, Miss.

14. **Poarch Community Church**
    Atmore, Ala.

Map dots are approximate locations of the 14 Gulf States Conference congregations in relation to Hurricane Katrina's intensity as shown on the Aug. 29 NOCC infrared satellite image.

States
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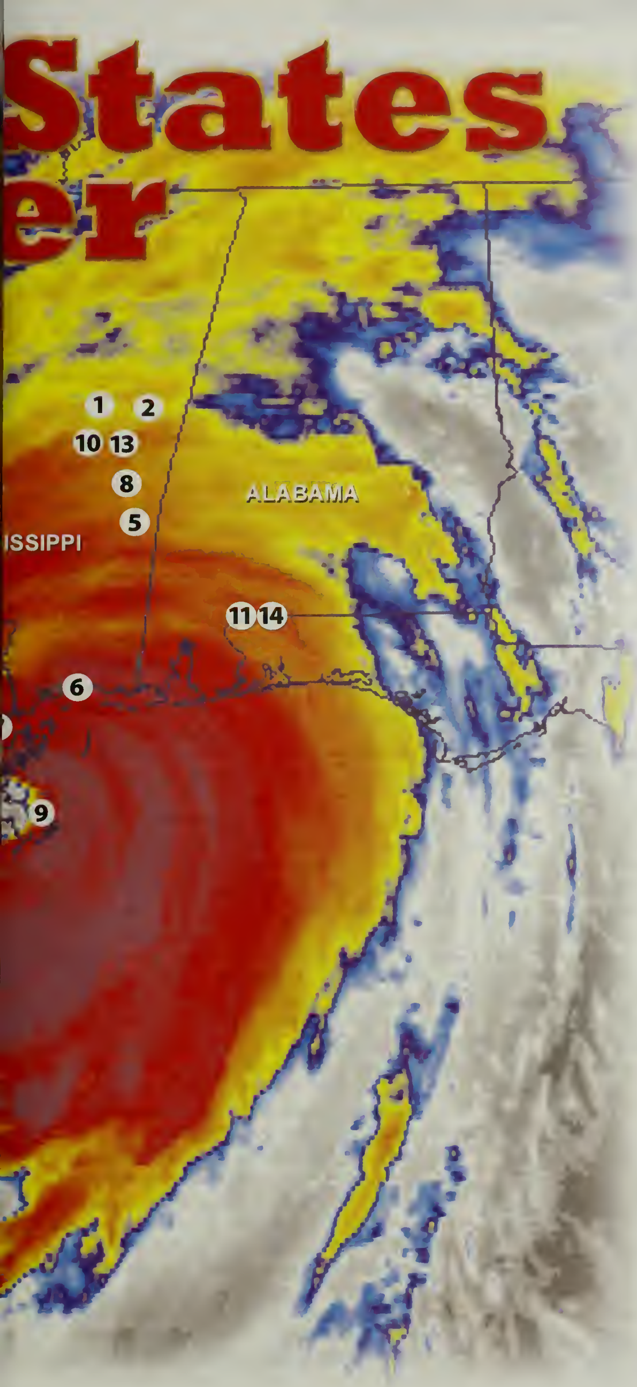

Looking toward the Gulf from debris-strewn downtown Biloxi, Miss.

Pastor Nelson and Pam Roth survey damage to the Gulfhaven Mennonite Church building in Gulfport, Miss.

Cars wait in miles-long gas line under a torn billboard near Mobile, Ala.

Photos courtesy Mennonite Disaster Service

Mennonite Disaster Service reported on Sept. 9 that it had enough volunteers and requested that people not call churches in the affected areas of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Those churches are overwhelmed by calls and are unable to properly care for their own concerns and members as a result. MDS asks that no material aid be sent to New Orleans "as it cannot get to the intended recipients and will be wasted as a result." MDS is accepting money donations only. As of Sept. 8, MDS had received $1.2 million from U.S. donors and $200,000 (Cdn.) from Canadians. In the United States, checks can be sent to MDS at 1018 Main St., Akron, PA 17501.—*MDS*

Publishing: a nonstarter or a core ministry?

Ron Rempel is executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network.

While cutting my hair, the new stylist at the hair salon went through the obligatory list of small talk questions. "What work do you do?" she asked after inquiring about vacation and family. I said I work in the field of publishing. "Oh," she said. I ventured a few more comments about the kind of books and curriculum I'm involved with. She went on to other topics. I guess the reference to publishing was a nonstarter, at least there.

What about in the church—what does "publishing" connote there? What, if anything, is significant about the church having a publishing program? Why have Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada designated the last Sunday in September Publishing Sunday?

Printed and electronic literature is so abundant today—at least in our countries—that it's easily taken for granted. It wasn't always that way. As I browsed through manuscripts on the history of Mennonite publishing ventures, I encountered some passionate claims for publishing as a core ministry for the life and future of the church.

For example, in the 1850s, John H. Oberholtzer's initiative in starting *Religioser Botschafter*, the first Mennonite periodical in America, was cited as "one of the most important means leading to the founding of the General Conference [Mennonite Church]." An early attempt in the 1860s to establish a publishing house with its own presses was unsuccessful, prompting the conference to declare that "as a result of the defeat of this early intention ... the publishing interests of the conference have languished to the detriment of all the various other activities of the conference."

Similar strong convictions were evident in the pioneering work of John F. Funk, who started *The Herald of Truth* in 1863. For some 40 years the periodical was the flagship of a privately run Mennonite Publishing Company based in Elkhart, Ind.,—the forerunner to a church-owned publishing house established in the early 1900s in Scottdale, Pa.

Funk, who had a conversion experience in a Presbyterian revival in Chicago, was concerned that many of his own people, the Mennonites, "felt a deep sort of secret shame about their own denomination" (from *God Uses Ink* by John A. Hostetler, Mennonite Publishing House, 1958). "A denomination should have a literature of its own," wrote Funk. "It should have its own constructive and defensive lines of information and operation. It has its own peculiar polity, doctrine, agency, history, life and activity, and it should keep its people as well as others informed on these phases of existence. It has its own thinkers, scholars and institutions, and out of them should emerge those who are able to enlighten the public."

The opportunities to share denominational gifts and insights with the broader faith community are greater than ever.

Things have changed in the past 140 years. It's no longer as important as it was for a publisher to own printing presses. Print services are available from a variety of providers at a reasonable cost; besides, print has had to take its place alongside various electronic media. Further, denominationalism is under scrutiny, and there's greater openness to what Christians hold in common.

However, many things have not changed. Denominations are still with us, and the opportunities to share denominational gifts and insights with the broader faith community are greater than ever. The publishing needs of the church are still being served by both church-owned and private efforts. And the core purpose of publishing is the same—to create resources that both reflect and shape the identity of a people, for their inner life and their engagement with others.

With this in mind, Mennonite Publishing Network has sent worship resources to all churches for use on Publishing Sunday—Sept. 25 or a nearby Sunday. The communication includes prayers of celebration, thanks and petition. Celebration for the potential of a publishing ministry to bring the good news of God's salvation through Jesus to life—aided by insights from Anabaptist-Mennonite experience. Thanks for writers and editors, readers, teachers, learners who develop Sunday school curricula and other study resources.

The prayer concludes: "God, we pray that our denominational resources will guide us to know and love you, interpret your word, belong to your gathered community and share your good news."

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **What I have learned from horses**—Keith Harder
- **Consider the winged ants**—Jonathan Larson
- **Reflections on death**—Gordon Houser

Gulf States churches report damage

Lighthouse Fellowship building apparently 'disappeared' in Buras, La.

Gulf States Mennonite Conference, the second smallest area conference in Mennonite Church USA, was hit Aug. 25-30 by what will likely be considered the biggest natural disaster to strike the United States. In response to the devastation on the Gulf Coast, the denomination is reaching out with prayers, care, aid and shelter for evacuees.

No loss of life has been reported in the area conference, which has 14 congregations in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas (see pages 16-17). All but two of the congregations have been affected in some way, according to an email report from Karen Yoder, a staff member of Gulf States.

"So far we have not had much communication," she wrote in a Sept. 2 update, "but we have heard from a few friends down south. We have heard from Dave and Sue Weaver and Sue Williams from Gulfport, Miss., whose homes are still standing, with some damage (see box). Their congregation, Gulfhaven Mennonite Church, and most of the people from Gulfhaven are a few miles from the beach.

"It sounds like the worst of the damage was the first mile from the beach. James and Linda Williams from Amite, La., are OK, and I heard from Troy Farris that in the Venice, La., area there had been 20 feet of water, but it's down now to the level of the dikes. I haven't heard from any of our friends from Des Allemands or from Amor Viviente in Metarie, La., a suburb of New Orleans."

Bob Zehr, interim pastor at Open Door Mennonite Church in Jackson, Miss., in a Sept. 2 email gave updates on Open Door, Des Allemands (La.) Mennonite Church and Lighthouse Fellowship Church in Buras, La.

"George Reno and his wife, Ruby, are safe in Des Allemands with George's nephew Doyle," he wrote. "Apparently Lighthouse Fellowship has disappeared, as lower Plaquemines Parish has disappeared into the Gulf. George told me this morning that he hasn't had time to cry yet, but he is sure that will come.

"David Roth, pastor of Des Allemands Church, is back in Des Allemands after evacuating to Texas. [The town] is under a police state with no electricity. The insides of homes are impossible [to live in], with high humidity and high temperatures. There was no structural damage to the church or homes, but many trees are down, and the electrical system is out. We are told it may take a month to be online again.

"Vivian and I were in Jackson during the storm. We were on the weak side of the storm there, but even so it was terrifying to hear the trees crashing in the night. Power was off for a day. There was no structural damage in the area.

Ted Williams

Brice Hartman and Allison Williams, both from Bristol, Ind., inspect the damage to Gulfhaven Mennonite Church in Gulfport, Miss., Sept 2. They traveled to Gulfport in a van loaded with supplies and money from family members, friends and Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

"It is surreal and hard to even talk about what has happened. We walk around with our emotions close to the surface. We waited in line for gas for an hour. In fact there was no gas available in our parish (county) today. We drove to an adjoining parish and then had to go through a police checkpoint to get home."

Duane Maust, conference moderator and co-pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Meridian, Miss., with his wife, Elaine, says their congregation, 200 miles north of New Orleans, was without power and that fuel was scarce. Telephone service was restored on Aug. 30, and utilities are running by generator. The area sustained winds of almost 100 mph, with damage mostly to trees.

In other reports, Steve Cheramie Risingsun, pastor of Poarch Community Church, says that many in his community and Native Christian congregations within Louisiana evacuated as far away as Texas, Tennessee and north Alabama. While little damage was done in the Poarch area, about 40 evacuees from Louisiana stayed at the church to wait out the storm (see page 20).—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA*

Update from Gulfport, Miss.

"Electricity just come on today at our business," Gulfhaven's assistant pastor Dave Weaver said Sept. 8, "[but] not yet at home. We're missing half our roof at work with water and collapsed ceilings. We're getting our employees back in their places as fast as we can. They need the work. We have employees who don't have homes to return to. Sue and I have a damaged roof with some water damage at home. We're among the fortunate. The response to this disaster has been heartwarming. … There has been an unbelievable outpouring of concern and aid from all across the country. I drove by our church several days ago … to find four Amish guys removing what was left of our steeple. Quite an unusual sight in Gulfport, Miss."

The church's Web site is www.gulfhaven.org.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Poarch Community provides shelter

Native American congregation opens church, but it hasn't been an easy road.

Risingsun

During the massive evacuation before Hurricane Katrina roared through, many families got stranded on the highway, says Steve Cheramie Risingsun, pastor at the Poarch Community Church, a Native American Mennonite church.

"I didn't know these families before," says Risingsun. "They were stranded on the highway and lost. They couldn't find a place to stay or any gas stations that had gas. The travel police found them, and they came and contacted me and asked if we'd open the church."

The 50-member church rose to the occasion, bringing in food and supplies. It hasn't necessarily been an easy road, says Risingsun.

"Some of the people staying with us are smokers, and some of them curse. They had their dogs running all over the place, into the sanctuary. Their kids were breaking into my office and stealing things. They were pretty wild. They were playing with the PA system."

Then he took some time to relate to them, Risingsun says.

"We tried to deal with that and in the process we got to know the folks. One night we couldn't get the kids and teenagers asleep. It was 2 or 3 a.m. Then I sat in a chair to try to get to sleep, and one elderly guy who has Alzheimer's started slamming drawers. He thought he was at work. I thought, I can't go to sleep, because this guy will walk out of the building. It turns out there are a couple of elderly people with Alzheimer's."

Risingsun found out these families had some challenges even before disaster struck.

"I would get upset with these kids," he says. "But then I found out their mom was suffering so much from lupus. She's 32 years old. Then it helped me be a little more patient with the kids. So it has turned into a good experience of getting to know each other."

Lupus is a chronic inflammatory disease that can affect various parts of the body.

Risingsun also pastors another Native American church near Grand Isle, La., an area that sustained a direct hit from Hurricane Katrina. "It's now underwater. We've got two to three more families coming from that area."

What's next for the families and their temporary church home? Nobody is sure, Risingsun says.

"We're trying to help them get situated," he says. "I'm not sure. We're going to help them get settled here the next couple months. We might help them find some work here. We might try to help pay the first month's rent for them. They have to decide whether they want to stay or go. They may have some friends, I don't know."

Risingsun has lived through a number of hurricanes. "I went through Hurricane Camille and Andrew, too. And I got rescued off a rooftop from Hurricane Betsy when I was young. Seeing the footage, these rescues, it replays all that in my mind. Back then they didn't have rescue baskets. You just hung on tight to the person and didn't let go."

Risingsun said he fears the impact Hurricane Katrina has had on Native American communities, but he doesn't yet know what it is.

"It's hard to get communication," he says. "Many people are still evacuated. The ones that didn't evacuate we can't get in touch with. Their cell phones are from cell towers that are down. All I hear when I call is, 'The party you are trying to reach is in a hurricane-impacted area.'"

Those with whom he has communicated have some frightening accounts, says Risingsun. "They've told stories of alligators being thrown by the waves, snakes being thrown around and biting at everything because they're frightened. This is a rough thing as far as wildlife. I worry about the ecology, all the oil and gas and chemicals in the water. People will be touching that, then rubbing their eyes and touching their mouths and lips. It's only a matter a time before there's a real health concern."—*Reprinted by permission of Disaster News Network, www.disasternews.net © 2005 Village Life Company*

Update from Poarch Community Church

The travelers given shelter by Poarch Community Church (see article above) stayed a week before being placed with friends or family members or in a nearby Red Cross shelter.

"We let them use our phones [while staying at the church] because they were concerned about their families in Louisiana," pastor Steve Cheremie Risingsun said Sept. 13. Risingsun did not yet know what the financial cost would be for his small congregation but noted that in addition to providing food and phone access the congregation needed to run its utilities all week.

While caring for the travelers, Risingsun was contending with his own troubles. Risingsun's mother went into a diabetic coma due to lack of refrigerated insulin and is now hospitalized. In addition, he did not know for a week whether a son and daughter were OK.

Members of Poarch Community Church are also confronting their own problems created by the hurricane.

"Four families have lost everything," said Risingsun. "Their whole homes are gone."

Risingsun said that 11 other families received some damage to their homes, mostly from the two to three feet of water that came inside. He also said he has not yet heard from all families in the congregation because they scattered to other states to be with family members.

There are some 15 core families that are members of Poarch Community plus others that participate from time to time.—*Everett J. Thomas*

MCC and MDS are not placing evacuees

Churches in hurricane-damaged areas suggest helping those already evacuated.

"At this time neither Mennonite Central Committee nor Mennonite Disaster Service are involved in the placement or hosting of hurricane evacuees," says a special MCC Web site posted Sept. 8 (www.mcc.org). "Churches in the hurricane damaged area have suggested you help evacuees who already moved into your area. MCC and MDS are listening to the churches in the hurricane-damaged areas for the next steps."

Aware that many individuals and congregations want to sponsor evacuees, MCC created the site as a resource to such sponsors. It asks sponsors to think carefully about their reasons for helping and the long-term commitments needed.

Why are we doing this? is the first of 10 questions. Other questions include:

- What do we understand about the evacuees, their current and past situation?
- What do we understand about the circumstances that led them to become evacuees?
- What are our expectations if we decide to reach out? What resources do we need to understand the circumstances of the evacuees?
- To whom would we like to extend help?
- For how long? A week, month, year?
- Who is available to assist from our family, church and community?

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. executive director Rolando Santiago and Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag sent a joint email to members of the Constituency Leaders Council on Sept. 6 to explain the role each organization will play.

"In MCC we expect to use the knowledge and practices developed through the refugee resettlement programs of the late 1970s and early 1980s," Santiago said.

"There will be many lessons of racism, poverty and cultural competence for Anabaptists and Mennonites as they seek to care for populations evacuated," he said.

Schrag said the role of Executive Leadership will be "to direct conferences and congregations to MCC and MDS for assistance and guidance" and said MCC and MDS are "the right vehicles of our compassion."

Compassion for hurricane victims begins with an appropriate "theology of hospitality," MCC says on its Web site. "Woven throughout the history of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ church is a sense of being both a refugee and stranger in the land and a host to the refugee and stranger. … Hospitality means preparing a welcoming place and the table of the Lord is open to all who come."

In a phone call on Sept. 8, Santiago reported that MCC has been inundated with calls from people offering help for evacuees.

"We received offers for support," Santiago said. "We take the calls and record them, but we are not a clearinghouse."

Santiago also reported that two staff members from MCC Central States began meeting with other leaders in Houston on Sept. 8 to coordinate help for the evacuees in the Astrodome. Those evacuees were transported to Houston from the Superdome in New Orleans. *—Everett J. Thomas*

There will be many lessons of racism, poverty and cultural competence for Anabaptists and Mennonites as they seek to care for populations evacuated.
—Rolando Santiago

Gulf States camp 'heart of conference'

Owned by Gulf States Mennonite Conference, Pine Lake Fellowship Camp has been called "the heart of conference." But this place that is now the staging area for Mennonite Disaster Service projects in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina is faced with its own financial difficulties.

"The camp itself has survived building damage," said several leaders in a letter on Sept. 8, "but has an awesome cleanup task ahead."

Even more worrisome said Jeff and Cheryl Landis and Robert and Audrey Kanagy, current and former directors, respectively, is the disruption to key fund-raising events scheduled for this fall.

"Already two income-producing retreats had to be canceled," they said. "In addition, the annual camp sale was scheduled for … the first weekend in October in Des Allemands, La., just outside New Orleans. The profits from this sale make up a quarter of the camp's budget."

Camp leaders are aware that many Gulf States members had property damage to their homes or lost their homes.

"It will take months, or maybe years, to recover from this disaster," the directors said.

But Pine Lake is the place where members have found "peace, reconciliation, relationship-building and safety" since its founding in 1966. In the 1960s and 1970s it was where people of various racial and ethnic groups could "come together in safety." It also served as a refuge from hurricanes in the past.

"Pine Lake has been and will be vital to the emotional and spiritual well-being of Gulf States Mennonite Conference," said the Landises and Kanagys. In the meantime, they are calling for assistance for the camp's own well-being.

Those with a heart for this "heart of conference" may call 601-483-2267 or visit the camp's Web site at www.pinelakecamp.com.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Mennonites, Catholics meet in Colombia

After five years, group agrees they are 'called together to be peacemakers.'

Mennonites and Catholics in Colombia are "called together to be peacemakers." That is also the name of the document they issued on May 20 after five years of dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Catholic Church and representatives of Mennonite World Conference at the Colombian Catholic Bishops Conference in Bogotá.

This ecumenical effort was worth knowing about in the "fractured and pained country" of Colombia, said an invitation from Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church and the Department of Ecumenicity and Doctrine of the Catholic Bishops Conference. The three Anabaptist conferences organized the dialogue during the week of prayer for Christian unity. More than 50 people attended, including Anabaptists, Anglicans, Lutherans, the president of the Protestant Council of Churches and Muslims.

We don't know how to heal our own wounds or those of people mistreated in the war in our country. Are we as Christian churches willing to help reconciliation take place in our country?
—Peter Stucky

Father Carlos Mario Alzate of the Fraternal Order of Preachers (Dominicans) of St. Thomas University presented the first section on reconsidering our history. He lamented that a lack of finances prevented this meeting from being open to more people, such as interested university students.

Alzate highlighted the need to recover centuries of common tradition between Mennonites and Catholics. Also important was examining the social situation that led to the Reformation and martyrdom in both traditions, due to the intolerance during that period. Infant baptism and some contributions of medieval spirituality recovered in Anabaptism would be elements for further dialogue, said Alzate.

Each presenter had a respondent. The first respondent, Isdalia Ortega, an ordained Mennonite minister, highlighted the call to purify and redeem history. She said the document fell short in explaining the political, social and economic conditions and the search for social change in the radical movements. She underlined the importance of our pacifist tradition and that the Anabaptists did not persecute the Catholics.

Ortega said the challenges that remain include reviewing post-Reformation history, recovering the patristic tradition and the contribution of women, working with the moral and political force that motivated the Reformation movements.

Father Alberto Echeverri of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), director of post-graduate studies in the faculty of theology of Javeriana University, presented three points: the nature of the church, sacraments and ordinances—including a commitment toward peace—were ecclesiological, he said.

The Mennonite conviction that Christians are the bearers of peace can influence changes in our social, political and Catholic reality, Echeverri said, and can reach common people.

These changes can't wait, he said. They are urgent in Colombian society. Reconciliation and justice, the pressing need to address military service and conscientious objection set the agenda of common actions in Colombia.

Peter Stucky, pastor of the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo and a Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee member, told about Swiss Reformed pastors who recently traveled to Pennsylvania to seek reconciliation with Mennonites. He also highlighted paragraph 202 of the document in which Catholics and Mennonites mutually recognize sins against the other. He said the document was timely in Colombia, where two German Catholic missionaries were cooperating in a new Anabaptist School of Peace in Bogotá.

"We [in Colombia] are deeply wounded and don't know how to heal our own wounds or those of people mistreated in the war in our country," he said. "Are we as Christian churches willing to help reconciliation take place in our country?"—*Peter Stucky with Roberto Caicedo and Arturo Orreg for Mennonite World Conference*

Church Relations Manager

Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA) has an opening for a church relations manager (CRM) for the Mid-Atlantic region (VA, south central PA, and other southeastern states) and for the Midwest (KS, OK, NE). A CRM is responsible for building awareness of MMA in congregations and conferences. This is done by building connections to MMA services; nurturing the advocate system; and helping churches use MMA fraternal programs. Qualified candidates will have a belief in the mission of MMA and a willingness to gain general knowledge of MMA products and services; good communication and public speaking abilities; understanding of local church structures; significant congregational experience; and a willingness to travel (50 to 70 nights per year). For more information about the responsibilities and qualifications of this position, please visit our Web site, www.mma-online.org, and go to "Careers."

MMA, a stewardship solutions organization affiliated with Anabaptist denominations, provides insurance and financial services. We are an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary and excellent benefits. Send resume and cover letter to:

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hr@mma-online.org
Fax: (574) 537-6635

MMA®

Matthew Lester

MCC trains workers

HIV/AIDS education helps Masai.

Rebecca Matura, a midwife in southwestern Kenya, learned how to protect herself from HIV/AIDS through an MCC-funded project of Presbyterian churches among the Masai ethnic group.

Matura first heard about AIDS four years ago, when her neighbors told her about a deadly and incurable disease that had arrived in Kenya's Great Rift Valley. Matura learned more at a presentation at her Presbyterian church, where a health educator described the ways AIDS can be transmitted—through sex, birth and infected sharp objects. As a midwife, Matura knew she was at risk. She took an HIV test, which came back negative, and started taking steps to protect herself.

"Now we use gloves so that my blood and the blood of the mother I'm attending do not come in contact," she says.

Matura and her community belong to the Masai ethnic group, whose traditional way of life involves herding cattle on the grasslands of the Great Rift Valley. Mennonite Central Committee is funding a project to educate the Masai of this region about HIV/AIDS through an outreach of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, which has 25 congregations in the area. MCC has funded the training of 100 health educators in the region. The Presbyterian churches often send teams of evangelists throughout the area, and health educators go along to share information about HIV/AIDS. The health educators also speak at schools, churches and community meetings.

"It's a healing ministry, and it's a ministry when people are given light as we tell people about the kingdom of God," says Rev. Stephen Mparinkoi, a Masai evangelist who serves as head pastor of all the area's Presbyterian congregations.

Jayne Suckfull, the manager of a Kenyan organization that administers HIV tests, says that the churches have convinced a lot of Masai people to be tested.

"The Masai community are communal people," Suckfull says. "Throughout Masai land, the pastor's work has opened up the community to hear about HIV."

However, the rural region in which the Masai live has no hospitals and few clinics, and a Masai tradition of polygamy may contribute to the spread of HIV, according to Mparinkoi. Suckfull says about 5 percent of Masai adults are infected, and the main challenge is for the community to acknowledge the need for precautions against HIV. Some men and women are now coming to be tested for HIV before getting married, she says.

Mparinkoi says that teaching publicly about AIDS prevention is a natural part of the church's role as a trusted member of the community.

"Jesus said, 'If I tell you things of this world, and you do not believe, how will you believe the heavenly things I tell you?'" Mparinkoi says.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Now we use gloves so that my blood and the blood of the mother I'm attending do not come in contact.
—nurse-midwife Rebecca Matura

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‘Real presence’ is top priority for MWC

Leaders consider new membership category, struggle with financial pressures.

One year ago, the Mennonite World Conference executive committee decided to hold the next global assembly in Paraguay in 2009. This year, meeting at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., Aug. 4-10, committee members tended to the ongoing work of MWC. They also spent time in prayer as the agenda brought attention to member churches in distress in Colombia, Congo, Kenya, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.

On Saturday morning, president Nancy Heisey presented a collection of prayers for Zimbabwe written by North American Mennonites at their July convention in Charlotte, N.C., to vice-president Danisa Ndlovu from Bulawayo.

“I don’t shed tears for the suffering in Zimbabwe,” said an emotional Ndlovu after a moment of silence “but for the sharing of solidarity with us. Prayer is the greatest gift you can give us.”

I don’t shed tears for the suffering in Zimbabwe but for the sharing of solidarity with us. Prayer is the greatest gift you can give us.
—Danisa Ndlovu

Ndlovu will take the letters home and present them to the annual conference of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zimbabwe.

Ranking top priorities for the next four years posed a challenge for committee members. Along with planning the 2009 assembly, one high priority was identified by executive secretary Larry Miller.

“Appeals for solidarity with churches under duress,” Miller said, “suggest to me that top priority for MWC program in the next period should be establishing ‘real presence’ with these churches as well as between these churches and other MWC members.”

Tim Lind reported one example of the importance of “presence” from his trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo in April and May. The visit prepared a proposed three-year effort by MWC, member churches in the Congo and partners in the global North to nurture conversation with Congolese Mennonites who are feeling some isolation since historical relationships have diminished.

A new proposal that staff will rework—incorporating the counsel of the executive committee—and bring to the General Council meeting in Pasadena, Calif., in March 2006 deals with “modes of belonging” to MWC.

It could change criteria for associate membership and extend eligibility to some international Anabaptist-related church associations. It also suggests a new “participant” category for church-related agencies, institutions, networks and fellowships as well as local congregations.

Another major issue that emerged during the week was fund-raising and the cost of translation and distribution to the global community of print material, including books, the quarterly magazine and news releases.

News is released to about 220 addresses around the world and posted on the Web site only in English. A limited number of releases are translated voluntarily into local languages. The magazine is issued in English (*Courier*), French (*Courrier*) and Spanish (*Correo*)—which is costly, as is distribution.

Other pieces of the MWC picture point to financial pressures. While MWC ended 2004 with a small, unrestricted fund balance and a similar balance is projected for 2005, overall assets have declined.

“Looking at the numbers, you might say we are in a weaker financial position this year than last year, although we must remember 2004 was a non-assembly year,” said MWC treasurer Paul Quiring.

The travel fund is a recurring challenge, particularly for the General Council meeting that falls between assemblies, said Miller, adding that the challenge will continue since membership in the global South is growing.

Last year, executive members agreed to try making decisions by consensus, a model they continued this year, using yellow cards to signal affirmation and blue cards for a need for further deliberation.—*Ferne Burkhardt of Mennonite World Conference*

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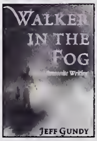

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CALENDAR

Aurora (Ill.) Mennonite Church, ***Centennial Celebration***, Homecoming Weekend, Nov. 5-6. For more information, call 330-562-8011 or visit www.auroramennonite.org.

Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society, ***Golden Harvest program*** (formerly Sommer Bros. Seed Company), Sept. 10, 1 p.m. Ted Sommer of Pekin, former vice president of IMHGS and lifelong seed processor, will host the program. For more information contact Julie at 309-367-2551 or email to info@imhgs.org or juliezoo@dtnspeed.net.

WORKERS

Horning, Les, was licensed Sept. 18 as pastor at Christiansburg (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Miller, Mervin, ended July 31 as interim pastor at Forks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Nissley, Amy, was licensed and installed June 12 as associate pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Mt. Lake, Minn.

Schloneger, Mark, was licensed and installed Aug. 28 as lead pastor at Springdale Mennonite Church, Waynesboro, Va.

Schrock, John, began Sept. 1 as pastor at Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Denault, Nathaniel Benoit, Aug. 18, to Benoit and Lori Greene Denault, Johnstown, Pa.

Ensminger, Jacob Miller, July 22, to Ryan and Danielle Miller Ensminger, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Gambucci, Nathan Joseph, June 24, to James and Anna Dick Gambucci, Minneapolis, Minn.

Graber, Emma Grace, Aug. 1, to Corbin and Tonya Gundy Graber, Divide, Colo.

Helmuth, Peter Lewis, Aug. 17, to Patrick Helmuth and Amy Glick, Orrville, Ohio.

Kalinoff, Brianna Joy, Aug. 8, to Dave and Melissa Banman Kalinoff, Woodbury, Minn.

Knepp, Ashely Elizabeth, Aug. 20, to Trenton and Rachel Miller Knepp, Sarasota, Fla.

Leister, Blaine Thomas, Aug. 27, to Nathan and Bronwen Souder Leister, Telford, Pa.

Miller, Mason Nicholas, Aug. 5, to Josh and Stephanie Achen Miller, Wayland, Iowa.

Moeller, Gracelynne Ruby, July 5, to Monte and Kim Miller Moeller, Houghton, Iowa.

Pannabecker, Kate Reneé, Aug. 20, to Tim and Jo Dewerse Pannabecker, Lancaster, Pa.

Rodgers, Benjamin James, July 14, to Terry and Gayla Roth Rodgers, Wayland, Iowa.

Salim, Soleil Asha, Aug. 3, to Ismail and Melanie Yoder Salim, Lancaster, Pa.

Schmidt, Fenja Pearl, June 9, to Patrick and Dora Good Schmidt, Kaiserslautern, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany.

Schuck, Joseph Kent, Aug. 13, to Joshua and Jessica Zehr Schuck, Creve Coeur, Ill.

Stahl, Benjamin Alan, July 1, to Timothy and Belinda Wilfong Stahl, Hagerstown, Md.

Steckly, Clayten Michael, July 30, to Mike and Mandy Steckly, Wellman, Iowa.

Wiens, Gavin Jeremiah, July 27, to Joe and Amanda Hiebert Wiens, Altona, Man.

Yoder, Kelyn Dale, July 13, to Karsten and Jessica Hochstedler Yoder, North English, Iowa.

MARRIAGES

Bomberger/May: Melodie Bomberger, Harrisonburg, Va., and Nathan May, June 25 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Britsch/Stevenson: Kari Britsch, Archbold, Ohio, and Michael Stevenson, Cleveland, Ohio, Aug. 13 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Brown/Loughry: Melissa Brown, Louisville, Ohio, and Matthew Loughry, Mantua, Ohio, Aug. 27 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Burkhalter/Schlabach: Troy Burkhalter, Harrisonburg, Va., and Trinda Schlabach, Harrisonburg, Aug. 13 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Doell/Miller: Diana Doell, Altona, Man., and Jordan Miller, Altona, June 18 in Altona.

Clyne/Wiebe: Tracy Clyne and Jeff Wiebe, July 2 at St. Andrew's, Wininpeg, Man.

Elias/Fast: Rob Elias and Alison Fast, July 16 in Altona, Man.

Fairfield/Versluis: Peter Fairfield, Bridgewater, Va., and Bethany Versluis, Harrisonburg, Va., Aug. 20 at Greenmount Church of the Brethren, Harrisonburg.

Falk/Friesen: Kim Falk and Shane Friesen, Sept. 3 at Assiniboine Park, Winnipeg, Man.

Gingerich/Showalter: Luke Gingerich, Parnell, Iowa, and Annie Showalter, Kalona, Iowa, Aug. 13 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

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"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

Graber/McKay: Heidi Graber, Ft. Collins, Colo., and John McKay, Ft. Collins, July 14 in Antigua, Guatemala.

Heinrichs/Wong: Andrew Heinrichs III and Sandy Wong, Sept. 4 at Pembina Crossing, Man.

King/Long: Krisma King, Mogadore, Ohio, and Charles Long, Akron, Ohio, Aug. 20 at Hartville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Kip/Lehman: Abbi Kip, Cleveland, Ohio, and Luke Lehman, Orrville, Ohio, July 2 at Bible Believers Baptist Church, Macedonia, Ohio.

Kisamore/Vincenti: Travis Kisamore, Harrisonburg, Va., and Bekii Vincenti, Chambersburg, Pa., May 28 at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church.

Klassen/Myert: Carl Klassen and Dawn Myert, July 9 in Winnipeg, Man.

Ladd/Troyer: Mark Ladd, Gretna, Neb., and Tami Troyer, Milford, Neb., Aug. 6 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Ringenberg/Schrock: Shem Ringenberg, Archbold, Ohio, and Jessica Schrock, Archbold, Aug. 19 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Stauffer/Wolfenbarger: Domonic Stauffer, Beaver Crossing, Neb., and Michelle Wolfenbarger, Seward, Neb., Aug. 13 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

Voth/Wiebe: Colin Voth and Carla Wiebe, Sept. 5 at Winkler (Man.) Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Balzer, Victor S., 87, Inman, Kan., died Aug. 30. Spouse: Lorene Gaeddert Balzer (deceased). Parents: David D. and Agatha Siemens Balzer. Children: Ronald, Harlin, Jo Anne; five grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Bontrager, Dorothy, 94, Wauseon, Ohio, died Aug. 20. Parents: Daniel and Mattie Bontrager. Funeral: Aug. 27 at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Bowman, Ralph, 86, Reedley, Calif., died Aug. 24. Children: Becky Watson, Tim, Merry Titus, Carol Ebener; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Reedley, Calif.

Bumbaugh, Mark William, 83, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 11. Spouse: Doris Suter Bumbaugh. Parents: Charles H. and Lydia Cook Bumbaugh. Child: Philip. Funeral: Aug. 14 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Clemens, Lois Gunden, 90, Towamencin, Pa., died Aug. 27. Spouse: Ernest Rittenhouse Clemens. Parents: Christian J. and Agnes Albrecht Gunden. Stepchild: Pauline Fisher; two step-grandchildren; five step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Dock Woods Community Chapel, Lansdale, Pa.

Collins, Sue Anna, 89, Sarasota, Fla., died Aug. 28 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: West Collins (deceased). Children: Sue Yoder, Shirley M. Shenk, Jim; 12 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 31 in Sarasota.

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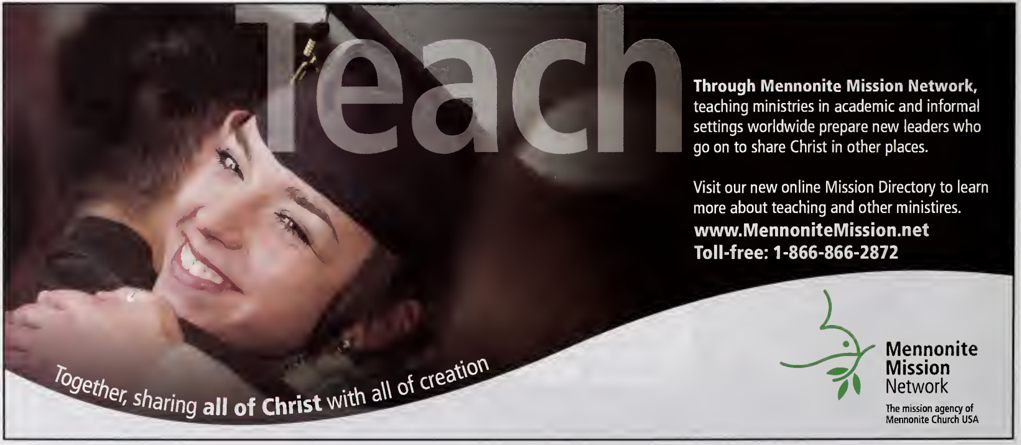
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Cressman, Harry Keith, 80, Peoria, Ill., died Aug. 3. Spouse: (1st) Katherine Mary Krager (deceased), (2nd) Audrey Mussleman Cressman. Parents: Howard Alexander and Ida Snyder Cressman. Children: Karl, Eric; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 7 at Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill.

Gingerich, Aldine "Bill", 89, Kalona, Iowa, died Aug. 21. Spouse: Wilma Bender Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Christian and Mary Zehr Gingerich. Children: Lucy Hostetler, Linda Miller, Leland, Frances Nafziger, Twila Miller, Brenda Stauffer; 22 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 21 at West Mennonite Church, Parnell, Iowa.

Johnson, Wanda Buller, 47, Geneva, Neb., died Aug. 6. Spouse: Lowell Johnson. Parents: Jacob and Sophia Buller Quiring. Children: Eric, Justin, Ross. Funeral: Aug. 11 at Farmer Mennonite Church, Geneva.

Kleinsasser, Anna Hofer, 96, Marion, S.D., died May 20. Spouse: Joe D. Kleinsasser (deceased). Parents: Mathias and Susanna Tschetter Hofer. Children: Leland, Jerome; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman, S.D.

Krabill, Gladys E. Johns, 90, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 22. Spouse: Rollin W. Krabill (deceased). Parents: Otis and Margaret Johns. Children: Richard, Joan Gross; one grandchild; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 28 at Beech Mennonite Church, Loiusville, Ohio.

Krueger, Jacob J., 84, Altona, Man., died July 2. Spouse: Anne Hamm Krueger. Parents: John and Margaret Hamm Krueger. Children: Carol Thiessen, Verona Thiessen; two grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 5 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Leichty, James Herman, 70, Wayland, Iowa, died July 5. Spouse: Dorothy Schrock Leichty. Parents: Herman and Florence Christener Leichty. Children: Joyce Schrock, Loran, Janice Hostetler, Brenda Roth, Barbara Jones, Edward; 12 grandchildren. Funeral: July 8 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Longacre, Esther Kolb, 84, Delmar, Md., died July 11. Parents: Horace and Anita Kolb Longacre. Funeral: July 15 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va.

Mininger, Nathaniel W., 91, Pennsburg, Pa., died Aug. 15. Spouse: Luella Smith Mininger. Parents: Elmer and Emma Willouer Mininger. Children: Janet McGuigan, Carolee Bergy; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 20 at Grace Mennonite Church, Lansdale, Pa.

Rittenhouse, Henry L., 78, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 12. Spouse: Beulah Hendricks Rittenhouse. Parents: Harvey and Mary Lapp Rittenhouse. Children: Dennis, Dale, Dean; eight grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 16 at Rocky Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa.

Rupp, Bueta Yoder, 72, Pettisville, Ohio, died Aug. 15. Spouse: Marlin Rupp. Parents: Oscar and Frieda Zaerr Yoder. Children: Monica Zimmerman, Gary, Jean, Diane Kempf, Carol Hines, Eileen Rufenacht, Arnie, Tom: 18 grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at North Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Snyder, Kevin Dale, 36, Peoria, Ill., died July 29. Parents: Eldon and Mary Grieser Snyder. Funeral: Aug. 6 at Trinity Church, Glendale, Ariz.

Springer, Catherine Yoder, 93, Gibson City, Ill., died Aug. 10. Spouse: Aaron Springer (deceased). Funeral: Aug. 13 in Fisher, Ill.

Widmer, Maynard G., 88, Wayland, Iowa, died July 21 of a heart attack. Spouse: Bessie Bawel Widmer (deceased). Parents: Daniel and Mary Graber Widmer. Children: Kate Shantz, John, Lois A.; three grandchildren. Funeral: July 28 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Yoder, Grace Viola, 81, Canby, Ore., died Aug. 18 due to complications from a stroke. Spouse: Charles Yoder. Parents: Sam and Elizabeth Schrock. Children: Patricia, Jan Raber; three grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 23 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Yoder, Robert D., 75, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 27. Spouse: Lois Peachey Yoder. Parents: Dorsey V. and Bertha Yoder. Children: Karen Dean, Kent, Doug, Kim; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 30 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

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Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan., is dedicating a renovation of its facility on Sept. 25, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The theme is ***"Framing the Past and Celebrating the Future"***. Speakers include past and present community leaders. Everyone's invited. For details: http://rainbow.ks.us.mennonite.net.

Mennonite Disaster Service in Akron, Pa., is seeking an ***assistant coordinator*** to begin in December. Responsibilities include recruiting for long-term volunteers, developing a new voluntary service program, assisting in special projects. For complete job description see http://mds.mennonite.net/Home/Resources. Send resumé to MDS, attention: AC position, 1018 Main St., Akron, PA 17501, or email kking@mds.mennonite.net. Applications close Oct. 31.

Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is seeking a ***full-time senior pastor***. The tentative starting date is Jan. 1, 2006. We are members of Mennonite Church Alberta and Mennonite Church Canada. Average attendance is 80-100 in a congregation diverse in cultures, ages and walks in life. For further information about the congregationsee www.holyroodmennonite.ca. Interested applicants please contact Guenther Toews 780-458-9358, chair of the Pastoral Search Committee, 3 Oakview Crescent, St. Albert AB T8N 6H8 or Jim Shantz, 780-485-2518.

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Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership Team is seeking a ***full-time associate director of convention planning*** to join the Elkhart, Ind., office.

In this role the candidate will give leadership to the churchwide youth convention, children's convention and/or young adult convention held every two years. The candidate will be expected to connect with youth and young adult ministries on behalf of Mennonite Church USA. Additionally, based on prior experience, current skills or aptitude, the candidate will oversee negotiations with vendors such as the caterer, audiovisual company, decorator, transportation company and housing company, just to name a few.

The ideal candidate will be committed to serving God through Mennonite Church USA, passionate about youth ministry issues in Mennonite Church USA, and able to support and affirm the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Ideally (but not required) the candidate will be a graduate of a Mennonite college, university or seminary. Additionally, the candidate will have experience in the following areas: working with youth and sponsors, speaking in public, leading meetings, proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point.

Moreover, the candidate will also be able to lead effectively, communicate well both in writing and speaking, demonstrate flexibility, demonstrate exceptional organizational skills, pay attention to details without losing sight of the big picture, travel up to 25 percent of the time, work well as part of a team, work well under pressure.

Finally, the candidate will have the aptitude and intellectual capacity to develop sharp negotiating skills, think critically about youth ministry trends and learn about the meetings industry.

Please send your resumé in total confidence along with the names and phone numbers of four references (your pastor, a peer, your current or former employer and a fourth person of your choice). Send to Jorge Vallejos, Director of Convention Planning, c/o Carol Epp, P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245 or email carole@MennoniteUSA.org. Position will close on Oct. 14, 2005.

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan (MC Sask) is seeking a ***full-time conference minister***. The conference minister gives overall leadership and direction to the mission, ministry and well-being of MC Sask with particular focus for pastors and congregations. Qualifications include an understanding of and commitment to Mennonite-Anabaptist theology and a preference for education and training in a Mennonite-Anabaptist institution, significant pastoral experience within the Mennonite Church, well-developed listening and communication skills, ability to relate to theological diversity and demonstrated administration and organizing skills. The successful candidate will exemplify boldness and creativity in implementing and building on the vision set by the conference. Willingness to travel throughout the province is a necessity. A detailed job description is available on the Web site, www.mcsask.ca. For more information and to apply, contact Henry Block, Search Committee, 3214 Milton St., Saskatoon SK S7L 3X4; 306-933-4660 (day), 683-0524 (evening); email h.gblock@sasktel.net. The appointment will commence mid-February 2006. Applications will be considered until Sept. 30.

Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, a Christian urban day school K-8, seeks ***principal*** starting January 2006 with commitment to the vision of providing quality Christian education with an Anabaptist emphasis in the ethnic and economic diversity of the city. Responsibilities include general administration, business management, educational supervision, supervision of overall maintenance and assistance in fund development. Administrator supervises staff of 15, coordinates volunteer services and reports to board of directors. Desirable qualifications: teaching and administrative experience, master's degree in education or related field and active membership in Mennonite or other peace church.

Send letter of application and current resumé to Search Committee, Chicago Mennonite Learning Center, 4647 W. 47th St., Chicago, IL 60632. For further information call Sueann VonGunten, Search Committee Chairperson, 574-848-7899 or vonalter2@verizon.net

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Director of libraries. Provide leadership and coordination to planning, budgeting, organizing and staffing the library. MLS required. A graduate degree in another discipline preferred. Theological studies essential. **EMU** seeks people who are supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Provost, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email provost@emu.edu. Position open immediately. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit our Web site, www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/allopen.html.

Drift Creek Conference and Retreat Center, located in the beautiful Coastal mountains,13 miles from Lincoln City, Ore., seeks ***administrative director for full-time position*** beginning Feb. 1, 2006. Exciting opportunity to provide leadership, passion and vision in Christian Camping Ministries for children and adults. Commitment to Anabaptist beliefs and values required, college degree and related experiences expected. Responsible for administration, development, staffing and programming. Reply by Nov. 3, 2005. Contact Ken Snyder at kenmabel@open.org, 503-362-5535 or Gwen Peachey at gpeachey@exchangenet.net, 541-754-6336.

Penn View Christian School is seeking an enthusiastic ***full-time director of advancement*** beginning in December 2005. Responsibilities include organizing a comprehensive development program, coordinating public relations activities, marketing, overseeing all fund-raising events and building relationships with constituents, churches, alumni and donors. Ideal candidates will have five years of experience and a bachelor's degree in a related field of study. Penn View offers a Christ-centered, academically excellent education for 660 students in preschool through eighth grade. Please send your resumé to Robert Rutt, Executive Director, Penn View Christian School, 420 Godshall Road, Souderton, PA 18964. Phone 215-723-1196; email brutt@pennview.org.

Mennonite Central Committee is recruiting for the position of ***MCC liaison to the United Nations in New York***. This is a three-year, full-time, salaried position. The liaison's assignment is to foster a Christian pacifist vision in the conduct of international affairs at the UN, interpret MCC to the UN and advocate relevant policies on behalf of MCC.

Significant experience outside North America and Europe or other highly industrialized areas of the world is important. Training in international relations, law or theology is preferred. Self-motivation and skill in cross-cultural communication are required. Relating to UN diplomats, hosting MCC workers, overseeing the work of office interns and maintaining regular contact with MCC offices defines the routine work of the MCC UN Liaison Office in New York. Candidates of a gender or ethnic group typically underrepresented in this type of MCC assignment are encouraged to apply.

Contact Prem Dick for a copy of the job description and send a letter of intent and a resumé by email to psd@mcc.org or by fax at 717-859-2171 by Sept. 1, 2005. The position is scheduled to begin Dec. 1, 2005.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a dynamic, multifaceted camp ministry affiliated with the Mennonite church, seeks mission-minded, visionary person for ***full-time program director*** position. This person develops, plans and leads programmed events geared toward families and adults (currently about 25 events per year), and also serves on Spruce Lake's Leadership Team. Applicant should have experience in church and/or retreat leadership, possess strong communication skills and be committed to an Anabaptist faith perspective. Entrepreneurial skills are also desired for the purpose of developing new programs designed to equip leaders to encourage others to embrace God's mission. Salary and liberal benefits package provided. On-camp housing may be available. Position open fall 2005. Spruce Lake Retreat is located in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Visit www.sprucelake.org. Send resumé to Personnel, RR#1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505; fax 570-595-0328; email personnel@sprucelake.org.

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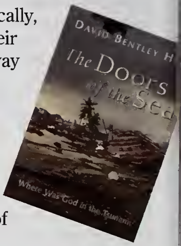
Hope amid sin, suffering and death

Gordon Houser

As we absorb the stories of suffering and loss in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we may experience a confluence of emotions: helplessness and the desire to help, gratitude and guilt over not suffering, anger at the slow response of government officials and awe at the heroic sacrifice of individuals. We may also ponder how this enormous tragedy—the largest disaster in U.S. history—fits with the sovereignty of God.

The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami? by David Bentley Hart (Eerdmans, 2005, $14) addresses this question. An Eastern Orthodox theologian, Hart is an incisive thinker who skewers both atheistic and Christian approaches to God's sovereignty that are simplistic or offer muddled logic.



For example, addressing atheistic critics of believers in the face of a catastrophe, Hart writes that "since strict materialism is among the most incoherent of superstitions ... it is incapable of imagining any conception of God more sophisticated than its own." Ironically, such critics are upset because their consciences "in some profound way [have] been shaped by the moral universe of a Christian culture."

Hart has even less patience with Christians who exhibit a "bland cosmic optimism" that sees God's total and direct sovereignty "in all the eventualities of the fallen world."

Instead, he writes, Christian thought "denies that (in themselves) suffering, death and evil have any ultimate value or spiritual meaning at all." God does not justify but opposes such powers and will eventually overcome them.

"The experience of the cross," Hart writes, "does not alter or 'improve' or 'add' to the infinite God: He did not need to learn to love us, and suffering and death are privations of reality, not 'new realities' of which God needs to be 'apprised.' "

The history of suffering and death is not part of a divine plan that will make sense of evil, Hart says. Instead, Christians need to see the struggle between the rebellious powers that enslave the world and the God who loves it.

Because God has created us in his image we have the freedom to choose love. Thus, "what God permits, rather than violate the autonomy of the created world, may be *in itself* contrary to what he wills," Hart writes.

Christ shows us how God relates to sin, suffering, evil and death: "sin he forgives, suffering he heals, evil he casts out, and death he conquers. And absolutely nowhere does Christ act as if any of these things are part of the eternal work or purposes of God."

When we witness the destructive fury of a hurricane or tsunami or see the evil actions of people who loot or murder or ignore the suffering of others, we are not viewing God's purposes but the work of the powers of death.

Christians are called to see a deeper truth than mere "nature," Hart writes. "To see the world as it should be seen, and to see the glory of God reflected in it, requires the cultivation of charity." Such selfless charity helps us see the true inner essence of what God has created. Instead of optimism we act in hope that God will "make all things new." TM

FILMS

The Constant Gardener (R) is a stylish thriller based on John leCarré's novel about a British couple in Kenya who uncover dastardly deeds by pharmaceutical companies. The scenes of Kenya's shacks and crowds of suffering yet joyful poor are riveting. The film indicts the West for its harsh use of Africa for experimental purposes.

Murderball (R) is a documentary about quad rugby, a rough paralympic sport played by quadriplegics in metal-plated wheelchairs. It interviews members of the U.S. team and the U.S.-born captain of the Canadian team. The unromantic approach shows people going on with their lives.

Walk on Water (unrated) is an Israeli film that tackles delicate issues, such as Israeli attitudes toward Germans and Palestinians, with candor and evenhandedness. While the ending is Pollyannaish, the film enters territory rarely explored.

DVDS

Beyond Gates of Splendor (PG-13, $19.98, 96 minutes) tells the amazing story of an Indian tribe in Ecuador who came to Christ after some of them killed five missionaries in 1956.

Children of the Nakba (Mennonite Central Committee, 26 minutes) relates the effects of the "Nakba" (Arabic for "catastrophe") between 1947 and 1949, when Israeli military forces destroyed more than 500 Palestinian villages and expelled 700,000 to 900,000 Palestinians from their lands. A study guide is included.

BOOKS

Better Off: Flipping the Switch on Technology by Eric Brende (Harper Collins, 2004, $24.95) tells how Eric and Mary Brende left their life on the electrical grid—cars, stoves, refrigerators, phones, computers, running water—and began an 18-month experiment among "an aggregation of Amish, Mennonites and mainstream Americans from all corners of the country" he calls Minimites. Eventually they move to a town, but they remain committed to "the principle of minimation ... : It is better to find a nontechnological solution than a technological one, or failing that, a less technological solution than a more technological one." He includes comments on religious practices.

Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Laws That Changed America by Nick Kotz (Houghton Mifflin, 2005, $26) is a thoroughly researched look at the uneasy alliance of Johnson and King. Together they helped produce "the most dramatic social change in America since the Emancipation Proclamation." The passage of the 1964 and 1965 civil rights acts, Kotz writes, effected "the end of legal apartheid in America."

CDS

Sounds Like Sunday by Vern and Christina Neufeld ($20) includes 12 traditional hymns arranged and sung in a folk music style. The CD may be ordered in a German or English version from soundslikesunday@mts.net or go to www.vernneufeld.com.

Books for Family and Home from Herald Press

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Paper, 150 pages, $9.99; in Canada $12.49

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With Our Feet

Praying with Our Feet

Lisa D. Weaver

A group of friends get together to go on a special walk. They want to remind their neighbors that war doesn't bring peace in our world. They know that Jesus wants us to love everyone. Jesus even wants us to love our enemies, who are just like us in many ways! The walkers wear shoes of all sizes, colors, and shapes. They're praying with their feet, walking with the God of Peace. Includes an afterword for adults by Tonya Ramer Wenger.

Paper, 40 pages, $12.99; in Canada $16.29

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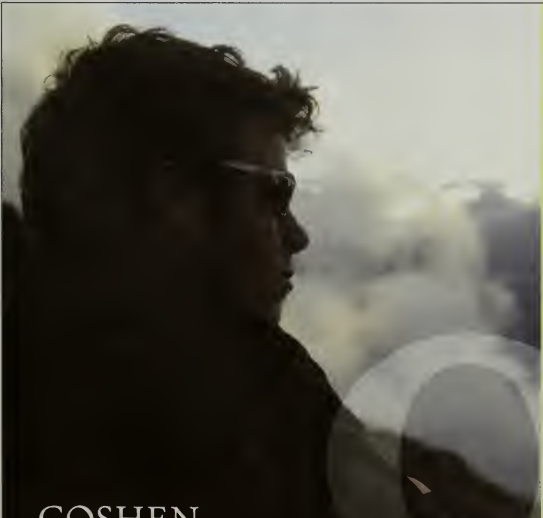

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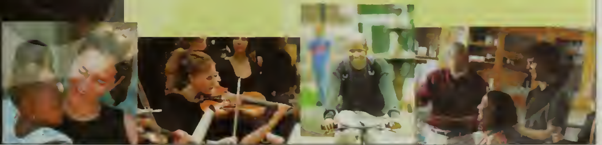

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Everett J. Thomas

Another perfect storm

Like the monster storm that hit North America's eastern seaboard in October 1991, Hurricane Katrina was another perfect storm—or a "perfect hell" as victims said in 1991—for us, for our country and for our government.

As we begin to unravel some of the elements that converged to give us this complicated catastrophe, it is clear that Katrina hit us just right to reveal some of our country's—and perhaps our own—misplaced values, arrogance and racism (see box).

The first element in this perfect storm was a Category Four hurricane. The physical structures around New Orleans were designed to withstand a Category Three hurricane, and they performed as expected: They failed when the load exceeded the physics for which they were designed. Government leaders knew their limitations. But instead of preparing for the terrorism that comes from natural forces, our country's leaders spent millions on the war in Iraq.

This failure contributed to a second element in the perfect storm: unnecessary loss of life. The flooding claimed many victims—for many reasons. Some residents disobeyed the mandatory evacuation order because they—and generations before them—had ridden out hurricanes. Many, however, remained in their homes because they were too poor to leave—or had no place to go if they left. Consequently this element of the perfect storm punished those who were arrogant and those without resources. Many became victims.

The third element in this perfect storm is the most heartbreaking: a sluggardly response from our government that cost thousands of people their lives. I expect multiple government investigations will conclude that race was a factor in the slow response. Although we have not had a natural disaster on this scale during our lifetime, it is difficult to imagine that the response would have been so tardy if the city devastated was populated by mostly white, middle-class folks.

The current dimension of this perfect storm is the disease and contamination left behind by decaying bodies, oil and gas from flooded vehicles, raw sewerage and industrial chemicals. The impact on the natural environment—including the rich fishing grounds in the Gulf of Mexico—will be devastating.

But the storm is not yet over, and we must be careful about the actions we take while still reeling from this awful event.

Hurricane Katrina has traumatized many of us who live nowhere near the devastation. While not suffering shock like those directly affected, we do experience displacement and disorientation. But in the midst of it, we also want to help.

Fortunately, our church has institutions—such as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite Disaster Service—that have the contacts, experience and organization to let us help most effectively. Therefore, we do well to respond in ways they suggest, especially when it comes to personally sponsoring evacuees in our communities.

"Hospitality is much more than inviting visitors for a meal after church," *Marketplace* editor Wally Kroeker says on MCC's Web site (see page 21). "It is breaking down walls that divide—walls of race, ethnicity, social class, you name it. Walking in the world of hospitality can be scary and unpredictable, but it will help you grow."

Or as MCC says on its "Theology of Hospitality" page: Hospitality means preparing a welcoming place, and the table of the Lord is open to all who will come.

As we try to clear our heads from this unspeakable tragedy, and as we respond with whatever hospitality we can, we also must ask whether those we help will be allowed to sit at our tables … and at the Lord's table in our congregations. If we cannot answer with an unequivocal Yes, then this perfect storm has also revealed our own misplaced values, arrogance and racism.—*ejt*

Katrina through the prism of race

If most victims had been white, how fast would have been the government's response?
  66 percent of black respondents said faster
  27 percent of white respondents said faster

Did government response show racial inequality as still a major problem?
  71 percent of black respondents said yes
  32 percent of white respondents said yes

Source: The Pew Research Center

OCT [illegible]

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Love is like a box of chocolates

Over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.—Colossians 3:14 NIV

Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Growing up, my sister and I pestered my father. For a time that pestering came in the form of reminding Dad to kiss Mom before he left for work. We went so far as to mark it on the calendar: "Dad kissed Mom today." Or we wrote, "Today Dad forgot to kiss Mom." Dad was a good sport. When we were there to remind him, he gave Mom a dutiful little peck, not wanting to be too demonstrative in front of his teenage daughters, I suppose.

Dad didn't need our help to keep marital love alive. Neither did Mom. This summer we celebrated their 60 years of committed marriage. I'm thankful for the beautiful example my parents are of what a marriage ought to be. They have been there faithfully for one another, through good times and bad.

Conrad, my husband, and I celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary later in the summer. We were young and naive, but he, too, had the example of a good marriage relationship lived out by his parents. (We celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary two years ago.) Our love began in friendship and deepened into something we didn't want to lose. So before God, friends and family, we committed our lives to one another.

We thought we knew a lot about each other on the day we were married. I'm thankful there was much more to learn and that we continue to make discoveries about one another. As we journey through life, we continue to grow and mature. I am thankful God has changed us in similar ways. Twenty-five years ago, we both thought we were marrying teachers. Little did we know that God intended both of us to be pastors.

As pastors, we have been invited into the lives and marriage relationships of others. Whether offering premarital counseling or talking with couples in established marriages, we count it a blessing to be given those glimpses into the couples' lives. At times we touch places of deep pain. Other times, we encounter an awesome joy. Yet all those places are intimate and holy.

One weekend we were privileged to be part of one of those joyful relationships. Conrad had been invited to bring the meditation for a wedding ceremony. The couple chose Colossians 3:12-17 as their text. Conrad spoke about love being like chocolate. Even the finest chocolate will produce an inferior piece of candy if it is poured over inferior ingredients, but poured over good ingredients it becomes a tasty morsel. The text reminds us to fill our lives with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Love is to be poured over these qualities (ingredients), binding us into a perfect whole.

I believe love is more than an emotion. It is a choice, one of many that must be made for a healthy marriage. Earlier Paul tells how not to live. We must choose both how we will and will not conduct our lives. When we make those choices well, the decision to love comes easily. This is true for marriages and congregations.

I have heard people say they just don't feel like loving. When we depend on the emotion of love—or compassion or forgiveness—we will be found wanting, for emotions come and go. When we choose to live in a loving, compassionate or forgiving way, God will empower us to live out that choice, for God is honored in that choice. Often, the emotion follows. I'm certain my parents have not always felt the emotion of love, but they have chosen to live in a loving way toward one another. Sixty years later, they continue to love one another. I don't always feel the emotion of forgiveness, but when I have chosen to live with a forgiving attitude, forgiveness has happened.

May we choose compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love in our marriages and all our relationships.

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Health insurance for all Mennonites

Dirk Eitzen, a Charlotte 2005 delegate, recently asked (Readers Say, Aug. 23) if MMA could provide more reasonably priced health coverage to church members if all Mennonites participated in MMA health plans. At MMA, we have long believed that if all Mennonites participated in an MMA health plan, we could accept everyone who applied. However, the cost of health insurance would be dependent on whether the new people joining used more or less health care than those currently covered.

If every Mennonite church member contributed regularly to a fund to help pay for health coverage for those in the church who don't have health coverage, this might solve part of the problem: There would be fewer uninsured Mennonites in our midst. Additional problems that would be left unaddressed are inequities in pricing of health care, personal responsibility for choosing healthier lifestyles and—among the insured—huge differences in what is covered and to what extent.

We at MMA are grateful for all the attention and dialogue this issue is generating through the assembly at Charlotte 2005, in the media, and in congregations participating in the health-care access study/action process. We believe it will take all of us working together to bring about the changes that are still, in many circles, being swept under the rug.—*Steve Garboden, acting president and CEO, MMA*

Environmental concerns at Charlotte 2005

Even though Dwight Wratchford (Readers Say, Aug. 23) didn't see it in a report on the assembly at Charlotte, Mennonites are responding to the need to care for the environment. From June 2004 through March 2005 a steering committee worked to design a new organization to assist in keeping care of the earth a priority in Mennonite Church USA. What emerged was a vision for a new organization called Mennonite Creation Care Network. More information can be found at http://www.mennocreationcare.org.

We worked hard at having a presence at Charlotte 2005. We put a flyer in each adult registration bag and a report in the delegate workbook. I was often at our booth representing the newly emerging Mennonite Creation Care Network. I had good conversations with many people who believe that creation care is an important part of being a missional church, and I presented seminars on a Christian's call to creation care. Lora Steiner presented a seminar to the youth on ecological footprints. The convention planning committee endeavored to get the convention center to work at being environmentally responsible with some success. There were recycling bins placed around the convention center. There were efforts made to reduce waste in the meals, such as using silverware and cloth napkins that needed to be washed. Efforts are underway to have stewardship of the environment as an agenda focus at the next assembly in San Jose.—*Luke Gascho, Goshen, Ind.*

Wrong about Old Testament

Re Ted Grimsrud's "Mercy, Not Retribution" (Sept. 6): I was disappointed and then dismayed with some of the suggestions being made. At one point Grimsrud says, "The Old Testament does not, in its overall message, tell us that God's holiness and perfection prevent God from simply offering forgiveness and salvation, neither does the Old Testament in its overall message portray God as a God of wrath who requires sacrificial violence to balance the scales in order to save."

If this is true, then why did Christ have to die? Grimsrud's statement is not true, and I am surprised to see it in print in a Christian publication. The God I serve is a holy God who cannot tolerate sin. The wages of sin is death. But the God I serve is also the God who loved me so much that he was willing, in Jesus Christ, to take my punishment. He couldn't just pretend my sin didn't exist; the punishment needed to be paid. He paid the price of my sin.—*Phil Rosenberger, Quakertown, Pa.*

Out of your element

I was intrigued with Gordon Houser's editorial ("In the Elements," Sept. 6). It reminded me of the phrase I've heard often: You're out of your element. But Houser gave me confirmation that it is not such a bad thing to be "out of my element." If I read him

IN THIS ISSUE

Oct. 4—the date of this issue—has special significance for animals in one ancient Christian tradition. It is the day for the Blessing of the Animals in many Catholic churches, as associate editor Gordon Houser describes on page 32. So we decided to focus this issue on animals. We began by asking Keith Harder, longtime horseman and director of Mennonite Church USA's congregational and ministerial leadership department, to reflect on what he has learned from horses and how he applies those lessons when relating to people (page 8). "Humans and horses share a common emotional field that includes fear, anxiety, love and trust," Harder writes. It is not from horses but from winged ants Jonathan Larson finds inspiration for his preaching (page 12). And goats become a symbol of perseverance in Larson's African village (page 13). Finally, the words of creation (page 32) call us to remember what it means to have dominion over the animal kingdom and how a cagey canine can teach us about our own rebelliousness.—*Editor* correctly, Houser is saying we will be out of our element if we are truly missional. Also, being out of our element will not be a one-way street of our giving something to the outsider, but we will receive as much or more than we give.

I was out of my element in my early 20s when I was sent by my home church to start a church in a small town in North Central Illinois. With a wife and five small children, I left a secure farming situation to be a pastor in a steel mill community. Or, after a few years teaching at Goshen (Ind.) College, to became the unofficial adviser to 90 African-American inner-city students who were "lost" on the bucolic campus. Or, when at retirement I moved into an all-black neighborhood in Atlanta.

But being out of my element has always been an opportunity to not only demonstrate Christian discipleship but figuratively, to walk in the other element's shoes. I don't presume to know what their learning curve was, but I, at 80, can certainly attest to the richness of my life from being, as Houser says, "in the elements." Thanks for giving a positive spin on what too often is seen as negative. As Houser says, "Being in the elements may not always be comfortable, but it can be enriching." —*Vernon Schertz, Atlanta*

Shouldn't have to ask for understanding

Becky Oberg lays out varied reasons why men and women enlist in the armed services ("Why We Enlist in the Military," Aug. 9.) I am grateful for and respect her point of view. I am troubled, however, that Oberg seems to feel the need to ask for understanding and compassion from Mennonites with regard to her military service. Surely Anabaptists should understand the damage that dogma can do when it is not accompanied by grace.

If those who respect and honor military service see Mennonites as intolerant, narrow-minded and judgmental in our pacifism, then we are not being good ambassadors of Christ. No one should have to ask us for understanding and compassion—perhaps most especially in areas of disagreement. These qualities should be inherent in how we relate to others. Grace and love, not dogma, should be our means of bringing healing to a hurting world.—*Brian S. Pauls, Overland Park, Kan.*

Population information incorrect

Re "Where Will We Be 25 Years from Now?" (Leadership, Aug. 25): James Schrag says, "If we keep pace with the trends in our country, by 2030, half our population, like half the population of the United States, will be Hispanic." Oh really?

According to the last census, there were 281 million U.S. residents in 2000. Of this population, 35 million were Hispanic or Latino, and 246 million were not Hispanic or Latino. So assuming that the non-Hispanic population does not grow at all, there would need to be 211 million new Hispanic residents by 2030 to equal half the U.S. population.

To reach 211 million new residents, the entire current populations of Mexico, Cuba, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Bolivia will have to move to the United States. To reach this population growth through a high birth rate, every single Hispanic woman between the ages of 20 and 44 will have to give birth to 32 children between 2000 and 2030. It is true that of the 31 million foreign-born residents in the United States, a little over half are from Latin America. But comprising half the foreign-born population is a different thing from comprising half the entire population.—*Jerry Sauder, Patterson, N.Y.*

Just a rock concert

My wife and I recently rejoined the Mennonite church after a 25-year absence. I have always loved music. My heart rejoiced with the spirit of Al Stucky's "When Is a Rock Concert Just a Rock Concert?" (Speaking Out, Sept. 6). I am a firm believer in change for growth no matter how painful. New wine can't be held in old skins. Neither can passionate love be held in joyless, humanly sanitized hearts.—*Eric Kratz, Telford, Pa.*

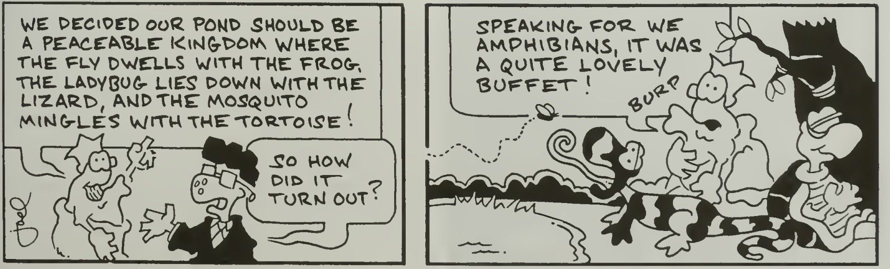
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

My favorite pet is a:

- ○ Dog (46%)
- ○ Cat (23%)
- ○ Fish (3%)
- ○ Bird (9%)
- ○ None (18%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


WE DECIDED OUR POND SHOULD BE A PEACEABLE KINGDOM WHERE THE FLY DWELLS WITH THE FROG, THE LADYBUG LIES DOWN WITH THE LIZARD, AND THE MOSQUITO MINGLES WITH THE TORTOISE!
SO HOW DID IT TURN OUT?
Joel
SPEAKING FOR WE AMPHIBIANS, IT WAS A QUITE LOVELY BUFFET!
BURP

IN BRIEF

Mennonite pastor opposes Iraq war

Doug Hostetter, peace pastor at Evanston (Ill.) Mennonite Church, testified before the Evanston City Council on behalf of "A Resolution Urging the Return of United States Troops from Iraq." Hostetter commented on his three years of service with Mennonite Central Committee during the Vietnam War, that the longer the war continued, the more homes, schools and marketplaces were destroyed and Vietnamese killed or incarcerated, the more "Communist" enemies we created. On Sept. 12, the council overwhelmingly adopted the resolution, which calls for an orderly and rapid withdrawal of U.S. military personnel from Iraq. *—Evanston Mennonite Church*

Punk rock band tours churches

Sisters Tonia and Maegan Wagler, with their cousin Devon Wagler, all from Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., and their high-school friend Graeme Harvey have formed a band called Blank Blue Sky. According to their Web site (blankblueskyband.com), they "found a way to put their messed-up thought processes and constant musical opinions into a positive force." The band's Aug. 19-27 tour included several Mennonite churches. They performed music from their CD *Hallways of Complacency*.*—Canadian Mennonite*

Ruth Shenk, missionary to Japan, dies at 75

Ruth Shenk

ELKHART, Ind.—In the 1960s, soon after Ruth and Charles Shenk planted the first church in Shibecha, Japan, a young man visited the Shenk home. He spoke boldly, telling the mission workers his town needed neither them nor a church. He told them they should leave.

In response, Ruth Shenk offered the man a snack. Then she poured tea.

Ukichi Kondo, the upset young man who received Shenk's gifts, later became the first Japanese pastor of Shibecha Mennonite Church.

Shenk, who died Sept. 10 in Richmond, Va., spent 36 years working with the Japan Mennonite Church in Hokkaido and Tokyo as a church planter with a reputation for kindness and grace.

She was born Ruth Frey on Jan. 2, 1930, in Wauseon, Ohio, the last of eight children of Ohio Conference bishop Edward Frey and his wife, Fannie. She married Charles Shenk June 19, 1949, in Archbold, Ohio.

In addition to her husband, survivors include two sons, Steven Shenk of Harrisonburg, Va., and Ken Shenk of Findlay, Ohio; two daughters, Gloria Shenk Good of Lititz, Pa., and Barbara Shenk of Urbana, Ill.; two brothers, Warren and Willard Frey, both of Archbold, Ohio; three sisters, Helen Rychener of Archbold, Ohio, Alice Yutzy of Plain City, Ohio, and Rhoda King of Archbold, Ohio, and 10 grandchildren.

She was a member of Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.*—Mennonite Mission Network*

Everett J. Thomas

From Bulawayo to *Glamour*

Sarah Thompson (right) was the North American representative to the Global Youth Summit during the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 2003. Her friend, Fiona Moyo, is a member of the Brethren in Christ in Zimbabwe. Sarah is an antiwar activist at Spelman College in Atlanta, where she serves as student government president. Sarah is also one of the Top 10 College Women 2005, according to the October issue of *Glamour* magazine. "Social justice is my passion," Sarah told *Glamour*. One of her Spelman professors said, "In my 23 years of teaching, she's the most impressive student I've ever met. I want her to run for President one day." Sarah, from Goshen, Ind., grew up in Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind. Readers of *The Mennonite* may remember her Speaking Out piece in which she described an eating disorder that was driven by a passion for peace and justice ("Mennonite to the Point of Vomiting," May 4, 2004).*—Everett J. Thomas*

Dorsa Mishler, mission facilitator, dies at 89

Dorsa Mishler

GOSHEN, Ind.—Dorsa Mishler was a facilitator, helping others follow God's call toward mission. Over his 30 years as personnel director at Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of Mennonite Mission Network, nearly 3,000 people entered service through MBM—either overseas, domestic or as Mission Board staff.

Mishler, 89, of Goshen, died of pneumonia Sept. 15 in Elkhart, Ind.

During his time at the mission board, Mishler interviewed and placed candidates for staff, voluntary service and overseas mission positions, as well as many domestic worker candidates. Several people who worked with Mishler called him a mentor. They said his generosity, compassion and organizational skills allowed him to connect with others to help advance God's plan.

He was born April 30, 1916, in Shipshewana, Ind., to Homer J. and Lydia Mishler. He married Mary K. Diller on July 12, 1946, in Elida, Ohio. She survives with four sons, John of Goshen, Robert of Singers Glen, Va., Don of Dayton, Ohio, and Dennis of Brownsburg, Ind.; seven grandchildren; and four siblings, Ruth Mishler, Lois Haarer, Margaret Coffman and Paul Mishler, all of Shipshewana.

An infant daughter, Barbara Anna Mishler, and a sister, Ruby Hostetler, are deceased.*—Mennonite Mission Network*

CPT worker arrested, then released

AT-TUWANI, West Bank—On Sept. 19, residents of Tuba village called Christian Peacemaker Teams after Israeli settlers from Ma'on settlement invaded their village. When CPT worker Matt Chandler and member of Operation Dove (an Italian peace group) arrived, the Israeli military was present. After Chandler and the Dove member took photos,

Courtesy photo

Bring them home now

Jep Hostetler (left) and Al Bauman of Columbus (Ohio) Mennonite Church join more than 100 who gathered on the lawn at North Broadway United Methodist Church for a candlelight vigil. After a time of singing and prayer, people called out the names of loved ones who have died in Iraq or who are currently deployed there. Many placed candles near white crosses that represented the dead American soldiers in Iraq. People who lost loved ones to the war in Iraq spoke to the gathering, which hosted the Bring Them Home Now Tour, which seeks to bring the voices of families of those who have lost a family member in the Iraq war and the voices of veterans of the war to the American public.—*Jep Hostetler*

an Israeli soldier demanded they erase the photos they had taken. They refused, saying, "This is a public place, not a military installation."

The Israeli military has made many similar demands to prevent photography of incidents involving settlers and soldiers. Israeli law prohibits photography of military installations, but photography of the actions of soldiers in towns or fields is not restricted.

The Israeli military called Israeli police. The police took Chandler and the Dove member and held them at the Kiryat Arba police station for three hours.

That evening, the two men were released without charges from Kiryat Arba police station. The army officer accused both of them of refusing to identify themselves and interfering with military operations.

As they escorted Chandler and the Dove member out of the station, a police inspector and a senior police officer gave them their names and a telephone number to call if they have problems with the army in the future.—*CPT*

Mennonite Your Way seeks hosts

The Mennonite Your Way Directory is a listing of more than 1,600 Mennonite, Brethren and other Christians of like spirit who offer courtesy, fellowship and hospitality in more than 40 countries to guests on a donation basis. Through Nov. 1, MYW is registering those who wish to be listed as hosts in the 2006-2008 edition, to be available in 2006.

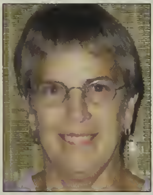
Host families offer hospitality and space in their homes, when it is convenient for them to do so, to travelers who seek fellowship as they stay overnight along their way. New hosts, as well as those listed in the current and past directories, are asked to register now to be part of this new edition. Hosts need only have an extra bed or floor space in their home or space for a camper or tent.

Host information is published only in the printed directory. Hosts are not listed online or on the Internet. However, listing information may be submitted online securely directly to the directory at www.mennoniteyourway.com or on forms that can be requested either from 80 W. Sylvan Drive, Mundelein, IL 60060-3315 USA, or 847-949-6179 or myw@mywdirectory.com.—*Mennonite Your Way*

MPN creates resource advocate position

WATERLOO, Ont.—Kathy Weaver Wenger, Lancaster, Pa., began working Sept. 12 in the newly created position of resource advocate coordinator for Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN).

She will promote congregational resources through a network of conference-based resource advocates. Initially she will work with conference leaders to select one representative from each area conference in Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada to attend a launch and training event Feb. 10-12, 2006, in Pittsburgh for the new Gather 'Round Sunday school curriculum.



Kathy Weaver Wenger

Longer term, the resource advocates will promote a broader range of resources, produced by MPN and other Mennonite church agencies. The vision for the conference-based resource advocates is to become living representatives of the *Equipping* packet all congregations receive.

Wenger has served as a pastor in Virginia and as director of a congregational resource center at Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary, Harrisonburg, Va. She also taught at Lancaster Mennonite High School. She works from a home office in Lancaster.—*MPN*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

70 and counting

John and Dora Albrecht celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary Aug. 28 at Vinecroft Retirement Community in Clarence Center, N.Y. They were married on Sept. 1, 1935, in Clarence Center and resided in that area their entire married lives. They have 14 grandchildren, 27 great grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren.

A listening ear

Janice Brown wanted to visit her daughter's killer and ask why he killed her. But her requests for meeting him were denied, writes Ellis Cose in *Bone to Pick* (Atria Books). After he was executed in Texas, she was permitted to meet with another murderer, a man who said he would kill again if given the chance. She told the man about her daughter's murder and listened to him talk about growing up with an abusive father and about his youthful plots to kill his father. At the end, the man said he would never kill again. Brown feels he reached this conclusion because someone finally listened to his story.—*The Christian Century*

What I am learning fron

horses

Lessons from Spanky, Buddy, Sonny, Sammy and Bandit

by Keith Harder

Horses have become some of my most valued companions and teachers, even though they were not a big part of my early life. Through my experiences and interactions with my horses—Spanky, Buddy, Sonny, Sammy and Bandit—I am learning more about myself and how I interact with people.

Trust is fundamental to healthy relationships. Some people believe horses approach life as prey animals, vulnerable to predators. If this is true, alleviating the instinctive fear horses have of humans as potential predators is basic to building relationships with them.

I remember a horse trainer saying that if you can allay a horse's instinctive fear, develop a trusting relationship with it and tap into the horse's natural curiosity and desire for relationship, you can do almost anything with it. But if the horse is afraid, it is a dangerous animal.

Loading horses onto an enclosed trailer is a good example. Few things are more unnatural than for a horse to enter a dark, enclosed hole, which is what an enclosed trailer must look like to a horse. Buddy, one of my older horses resists trailer loading, and loading him can be a dangerous ordeal. The others easily jump into the trailer with little coaxing. They have come to trust that when I ask them to enter the trailer I will do them no harm.

When I was with my horses several years ago, it occurred to me that a person with whom I had a difficult relationship might be resisting my concerns and overtures partly out of mistrust and fear. The lack of trust between us was more basic than the issues I thought needed to be addressed. I saw how I needed to listen more carefully and be less insistent about my agenda if trust were to develop between us. This experience helped me realize that trust is undermined when I become willful and demanding about my concerns and when others are not sure I am listening to what they are thinking and feeling.

Trust is undermined when I become willful and demanding about my concerns and when others are not sure I am listening to what they are thinking and feeling.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

Emotional process: My experience with horses confirms that humans and animals share a common emotional field that includes fear, anxiety, love and trust. A horse has an uncanny ability to recognize a person's underlying emotion—love, trust, fear, bravado, hostility—and will respond out of its own emotion, be it trust, anxiety or hostility.

In their book *Horse Sense and the Human Heart*, Adele and Marlena McCormick tell stories about their use of horses in their work with youth. They tell about horses detecting the bravado that tough, streetwise kids sometimes bring to their first encounter with horses. The horses immediately recognize the fear that may be masked by bravado. The honest, straightforward feedback of a horse often leads to more honest and transparent relationships with other people. Horses are used in a variety of therapeutic programs partly because of their capacity to sniff out the emotional dynamics that words sometimes hide and deflect.

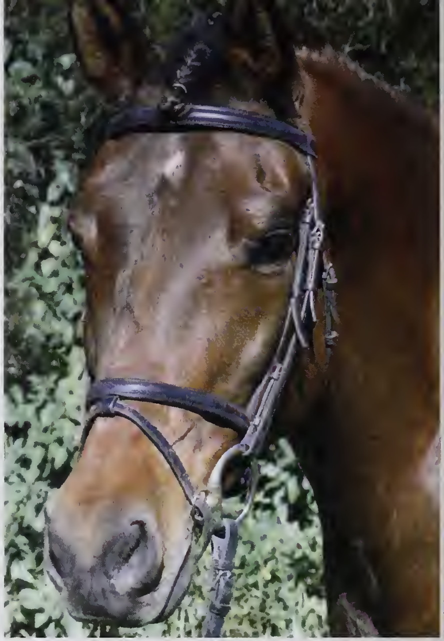
My horses are not impressed with what I know or my ability to talk about what I know. But they immediately know when I am tense or anxious, even when I am not in touch with these emotional undercurrents. They know when I am bluffing or posturing to make an impression. They react when I get impatient and try to force them to do what I want them to do.

Relating to horses has helped me become more aware of deep-seated emotions with which I am sometimes not in touch.

My horses are teaching me that I can't think, talk or will my way into a relationship.

Nonverbal communication: Monty Roberts, in his book *The Man Who Talks with Horses*, describes how he developed his system of horse training by observing wild mustangs communicating with each other. He saw how they communicated with each other with their heads, mouths, ears, tails, feet and withers. From this he concluded that safe and effective interaction with horses requires awareness of these nonverbal cues. Horses are quick to give off and pick up on nonverbal signals by which emotion is communicated.

Rational, verbal communication may set humans apart from other animals, but we also depend on nonverbal, bodily communication. We communicate many of our emotions, especially our fears and anxieties, reactively and nonverbally.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Becoming more observant about the cues given by horses has helped me recognize that I have often been too focused on verbal communication and concepts and missed nonverbal cues that others gave me or that I inadvertently gave others. Relating with horses requires being in touch with the underlying emotional process in our interaction and the nonverbal ways it is communicated. Interacting with horses is helping me become more observant and increase my capacity to recognize and decipher nonverbal communication.

I am also learning that communication only happens if the message is accurately received. It's not enough for it be sent. If a horse does not understand or trust what I am trying to communicate, my efforts to communicate are worthless or even dangerous.

My horses are teaching me that I can't think, talk or will my way into a relationship. Like horses, people instinctively react to having a relationship imposed upon them.

It's satisfying when a horse responds to nonverbal signals—strokes on its neck, a twitch of a rein, a bump on its side or the slightest shift in the saddle. Some people believe that a kind of mental telepathy can develop where a horse actually reads its rider's intention. I marvel at the bond possible between a horse and a person when they trust each other and are on the same emotional wave length.

Fast is slow and slow is fast: In his book *Horse Sense for People*, Monty Roberts explores the adage that "fast is slow and slow is fast." He insists that it simply doesn't pay to get in a hurry with a horse.

I am learning that my impatience usually reflects my anxiety and usually raises anxiety in others. It may reflect unspoken demands and my need for control that usually increases resistance and gets in the way of what I am trying to do—fast is slow.

I am also learning that this principle applies to my relationship with God. I often become demanding and insistent about what I want. My impatience with God belies a lack of trust in God's love and provision. Building trust and healthy relationships with horses, people and God takes time and patience.

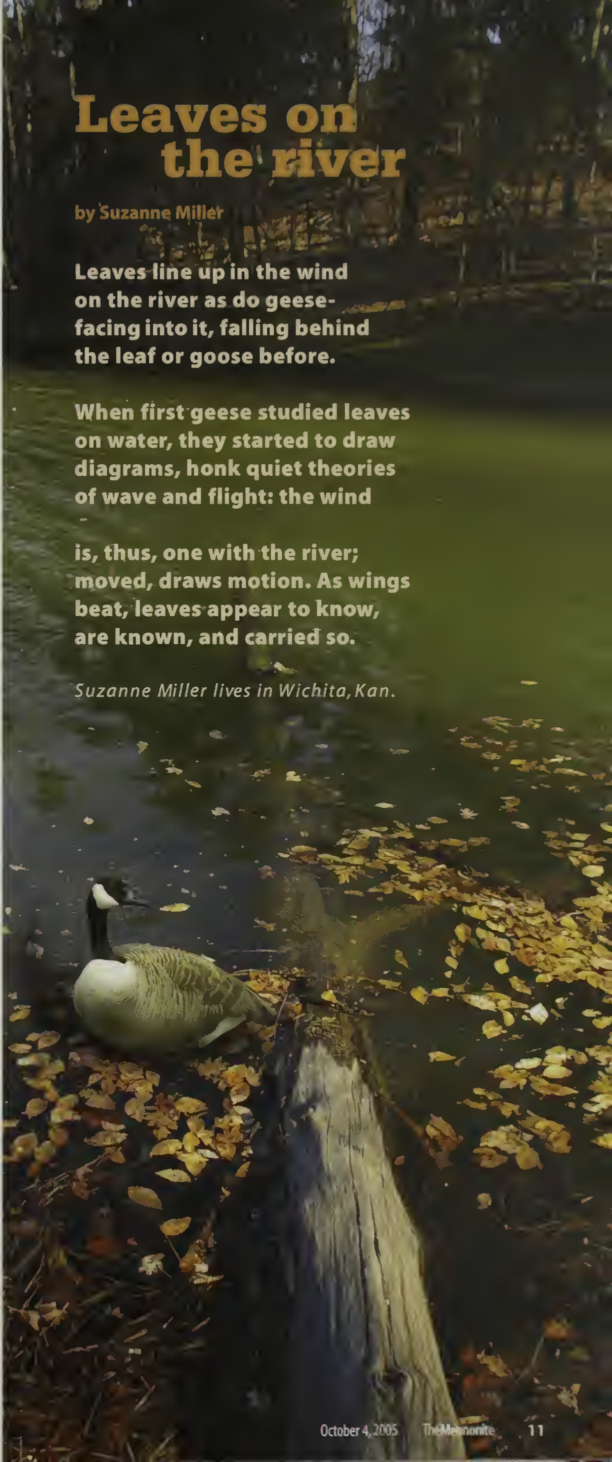
Slow learner: My experience with horses is helping me achieve greater self-awareness and understanding of what goes into healthy relationships and good communication. These principles are neither novel nor complex. Most people learn them without ever interacting with a horse. I have known these principles in my head most of my life, but I've been slow in learning how to apply them in my relationships.

I still have much to learn about building trust with horses and people and about nonverbal communication. I still get anxious and impatient and find it hard to act on the axiom that "fast is slow and slow is fast." Interacting with horses is teaching me about the corrosive impact of excessive anxiety and fear.

I don't mean to romanticize horses. They can be stubborn, mean and temperamental. I have been kicked, bucked off and bitten. As a young child I was riding with a grown-up and fell off when the horse was startled. I still have a scar on my head to prove it. But that horse did not mean to hurt me or anyone else. He was responding out of fear. Problem horses are usually the result of mismanagement or getting mixed messages from people. Their misbehavior is often the result of fear and responding to nonverbal cues that may have been given inadvertently. One trainer said he had seen few problem horses but many problem riders.

I am grateful for the simple pleasure of being with horses and the opportunity of building trusting relationships with them. I am also grateful for what interacting with horses is teaching me about myself and my interactions with people.

Keith Harder is director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA.



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Leaves on the river

by Suzanne Miller

Leaves line up in the wind
on the river as do geese-
facing into it, falling behind
the leaf or goose before.

When first geese studied leaves
on water, they started to draw
diagrams, honk quiet theories
of wave and flight: the wind

is, thus, one with the river;
moved, draws motion. As wings
beat, leaves appear to know,
are known, and carried so.

Suzanne Miller lives in Wichita, Kan.

Consider the *winged ants*

by Jonathan P. Larson

Creation at praise inspires thoughts on the craft of preaching.

Whether it was intended as a haunting figure of creation at praise, I cannot be entirely sure. But it was unforgettable. While the elegant liturgy unfolded at sundown, the hymn of language as much as of song, the winged ants made their entry as though on some cosmic cue. Deep from underground, called by the onset of rains in the Kalahari, they appeared that evening by the thousands filling the lighted hall with the whisper—as the Elijah story recounts, the "sheer silence"—of shared flight. And I sat there in the pew besotted, utterly agog with wonder, on the verge of tears, unable even to mumble the responses prompted by the prayer book.

But the fine old priest, a friend and colleague, led us through Magnificat, the Nunc Dimitus, the sharing of the peace, the Psalm and finally the homily without once acknowledging the exquisite event the flying ants were enacting in our presence: that they had sensed the season of life abroad in the desert and given their collective answer. I wondered if perhaps he was modeling a stout lesson in preacherly self-control. The text and whatever Gospel was announced to us that night I have long since forgotten. But not the vision borne on the wings of the ants.

The ants seemed profusely rich in invitation, begging to be recognized and followed. They had answered the thrumming, the aroma of life announced in the rain and danced in the light, taking captive our imaginations, leaving us in awe of the delicate abundance and the mystery of heaven's summons. As captives underground they had been set free, from the darkness they had soared to the light; from silence and obscurity they had emerged to give their natural but unbearably beautiful testimony.

What drenching truth—though the merest whisper of gossamer wings—aches to be named, witnessed and quietly heeded to the praise of God's glory?

As a sometime practitioner of this preaching craft, I have mused often on that evening. What telltale poetry of promise and jubilee, what early sign of that season of irresistible life has been sealed out of my leading, my preaching, for mistaken love of crafted script? What drenching truth—though the merest whisper of gossamer wings—aches to be named, witnessed and quietly heeded to the praise of God's glory?

Such wakefulness in preaching is what I long to practice now. The winged ants have set to flight such a yearning in this preacher.

Jonathan P. Larson lives in Gaborone, Botswana.

Huddled goats and *evening hymns*

Songs and hymns bring good news and release amid impoverished suffering.

by Jonathan P. Larson

If you should drive west from this African city of Gaborone some damp, blustery evening, you might notice as you pass a small farmstead a ragged line of goats hugging the courtyard fence to shelter from the rainy gusts, a homely but telling clue to what it's often like, fighting to survive in the teeth of life's contrary winds. It's not much different for people in Africa's backcountry, where the skin-of-their-teeth economy has stalled, where drought and hunger stalk both man and beast, but worst of all where the lure of distant cities and now the ill wind of AIDS has carried off the able-bodied by the tens of thousands, leaving the old and the very young to scratch for survival, to huddle in the lee of any improvised shelter.

What took me west on the highway was a small piece of this vast drama: evening prayers for a young father, a victim of AIDS who left in his wake three small children and their young mother, who also is now HIV positive. We gathered in the courtyard on that soggy evening, led by the village matriarchs. A window was opened to a nearby room so that the cloistered family from within might hear the service of prayers and singing. What made this even more wistful was the awareness that in a faraway metropolis, millions were assembling not under a ragged tent but amid marbled splendor to mark the passing of a beloved pontiff.

But then, lest anyone think that either death or hard times had driven this backcountry village to anything like despair or dejection, something extraordinary overtook us. As darkness fell, the cadence of songs and hymns gathered momentum. One by one, the elderly women rose not just to commiserate and offer comfort but to announce in confident, preacherly manner good news of hope and release. They echoed the prophetic promise of passing safely through flood and fire. They spoke of a land, broad and fruitful, that awaited all who live by faith, a land, it was clear, to which they had joyfully set out.

In one small African village, the winds have not stilled the human voice of joy or dimmed the radiant majesty of hope.

With a last exuberant hymn, the courtyard fell silent in the lamplight as the young children quietly distributed plates of food. I murmured farewells to the family as I took leave and returned to the city. It is still true that life in the vice of Africa's impoverished backcountry is about as hard as it gets on this planet. And like the ragged line of goats in the wind, many must cling to the fences for some small measure of shelter. But in one small African village, those winds have not stilled the human voice of joy or dimmed the radiant majesty of hope.

Jonathan P. Larson lives in Gaborone, Botswana.

Death often helps us focus on the present and give priority to what is most important.

Thin time

by Gordon Houser

Wake time, a thin time.
Wake time, in a thin place.
Wake time, tears and laughter very close.
Wake time, here and hereafter closer still.
–Irish Wake Prayer

Late on Sunday afternoon, May 30, 2004, I hugged my mother goodbye as my family and I left my sister Karen's house. As my mother and I always did when parting over the last several years of her life, we each said, "I love you."

That was the last time we did so.

More than a month later, on July 5, my sister Carol called to tell me our mother had suffered a stroke and was in the hospital, paralyzed along her right side, unable to speak. On July 15, she died. She was 88.

During those last 10 days of her life I made several trips to the hospital in Emporia, Kan., 75 miles from home, and observed the approach of death. Such times settle like a fog over our usual routines, the busy activities we take part in to fill our days. Out of that fog, as we settle into grief over our loss, questions about the meaning and worth of a life rise to the surface.

The present: Death often helps us focus on the present and give priority to what is most important. Samuel Johnson wrote that "when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully." Jesuits used to keep a human skull on their desks to remind them each day of their mortality.

During the last years of my mother's life she seemed to live in the present. She did not take for granted that she would live another day, thus the goodbye kiss each time I visited her.

In that way she served as my teacher, but I was an unwilling student. I continued to worry about mundane affairs and think about what I needed to do the next day or week or month.

She taught me again in those last 10 days of her life, when she could not speak or move much at all. I came into the cool hospital out of the July heat and sat at her bedside. I took turns with my sisters and Jeanne, my wife, stroking my mother's thin arm punctured by an IV needle and talking to her. I assumed she could hear me, though I didn't know for sure. Her inability to speak or respond mirrored my inability to help her, to make her well.

Reflections on my mother's death

At times we made eye contact, and something occurred beyond words. All the while I touched her, held her hand. Growing up, our family was not especially into touch. Yet here we were, at the edge of her physical demise, clinging to the sense of touch.

The physical: When we are sick or see a loved one suffer, we may want to escape our physical nature. Throughout history, various Christian groups have seen the body as evil and tried to escape its sinful influences. Yet we are embodied selves, and our faith affirms the body as God's good creation.

Watching my mother die, I became more keenly aware of the body's limits. Often we want to leave the body and avoid sorrow or pain, yet without them we cannot experience joy and pleasure—the physical intimacy of someone we love or the juicy sweetness of a ripe peach.

Jesus lived with hunger, pain, longing, and so must we. He experienced sorrow when visiting the grave of his close friend Lazarus. Later he faced his own death, fearless yet alone.

By its nature, death must be faced alone. While we gathered around our mother, she was on a solitary journey. She perked up some when her Methodist minister visited and prayed for her. At other times she moaned in pain.

The past: Sitting with this thin figure, I thought of her life and all she had given. I remembered sharing with her my early, fledgling poems when I was 15. Like me the youngest in her family, she was more introverted than not. Yet she practiced a consistent, genuine hospitality. Her door was always open, and she had something for you to eat or drink and was ready to talk or let you read or watch TV. She had a few rules, such as not taking food into the living room, but she also had toys for her grandkids and great-grandkids.

She had her moments of anger—what parent doesn't?—but she accepted a lot. I made some choices with which she didn't agree, but she lived with them and always welcomed me. One choice she agreed with was my marrying Jeanne.

I did not see her cry much. I saw her cry at the funeral of the son of close friends, when my brother got on the plane to go to Vietnam and after my father died.

Jesus lived with hunger, pain, longing, and so must we. He experienced sorrow when visiting the grave of his close friend Lazarus.

Over the years she wrote many letters—a lost art and one more way of making people feel welcome. That she always gave so much made it all the harder, all the stranger, to see her in her last days struggling with pain. Following her death, I thought of her as finally being welcomed, embraced and at rest.

The prayers: Celtic Christians developed prayers for the "thin times" of death and mourning. When a loved one dies we feel the pain of loss. Yet God through Christ has won a victory over death, "the last enemy to be destroyed" (1 Corinthians 15:26). How to see that reality and live in the hope of God's victory is a challenge all Christians face.

In a photo of my family on that Sunday afternoon—the last time I heard her say the words, "I love you"—the shadows of leaves against the silken sunlight seem to portend the coming shadow of her death.

While I continue to miss my mother, I wish to follow her example and move into Now. Rather than pine for her bodily presence, I want to live out what she taught as a way of making her present. I want to see through the thin times and awake to the bright glory of God's presence in each moment.

Gordon Houser is associate editor of The Mennonite.

22:1,2p

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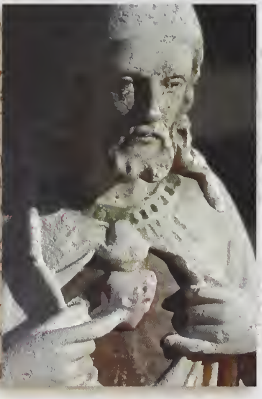

iStockphoto; text from *The Holy Bible New International Version*, Zondervan

The Last Supper

22:7–13pp—Mt 26:17–19; Mk 14:12–16
22:17–20pp—Mt 26:26–29; Mk 14:22–25; 1Co 11:23–25
22:21–23pp—Mt 26:21–24; Mk 14:18–21; Jn 13:21–30
22:25–27pp—Mt 20:25–28; Mk 10:42–45
22:33,34pp—Mt 26:33–35; Mk 14:29–31; Jn 13:37,38

[7]Then came the day of Unlea
Bread on which the Passover lam
to be sacrificed.[g] [8]Jesus sent Pete
John,[h] saying, "Go and make pre
tions for us to eat the Passover."
[9]"Where do you want us to pr
for it?" they asked.
[10]He replied, "As you enter the
a man carrying a jar of water will
you. Follow him to the house th
enters, [11]and say to the owner
house, 'The Teacher asks: Where
guest room, where I may eat the
over with my disciples?' [12]He
show you a large upper room, al
nished. Make preparations there.
[13]They left and found things j
Jesus had told them.[i] So they pre
the Passover.
[14]When the hour came, Jesus a
apostles[j] reclined at the table.[k]
he said to them, "I have eager
sired to eat this Passover with yo
fore I suffer.[l] [16]For I tell you, I w
eat it again until it finds fulfillme
the kingdom of God."[m]
[17]After taking the cup, he
thanks and said, "Take this and
it among you. [18]For I tell you I w
drink again of the fruit of the vine
the kingdom of God comes."
[19]And he took bread, gave t
and broke it,[n] and gave it to them
ing, "This is my body given for yo
this in remembrance of me."

Swords

The paradox of Luke 22:35-38, 47-53

by Heidi Siemens-Rhodes

At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples they would have to buy swords to protect themselves (Luke 22:35-38). Upon hearing this, the disciples produced two swords for Jesus' inspection. Later that same evening, as his captors closed in on them in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus stopped an unnamed disciple from using a sword to protect him and healed the person who had been injured (Luke 22:47-53). These two sword passages of Luke 22 have been a paradoxical puzzle for Christians over the centuries.

Did Jesus tell his disciples to arm themselves and then stop them from using their arms? Do we need to hold those concepts together—Jesus condoning, even counseling violence, and Jesus stopping and then healing the effects of violence? Shall we make room in our image of Jesus, this Jesus whom we follow, for both of these impulses?

Or could there be another way?

As it turns out, there are a great number of ways these passages have been puzzled with over the centuries of Christian history. You might call this one of the great theological Rubix cubes of the New Testament.

- Perhaps the simplest explanation is that Jesus was indeed changing tactics, from his earlier stance of nonresistance to a new embracing of defense with arms.
- Even farther along in this direction, commentator G.W.H. Lampe proposes that each of the disciples produced two swords, which would align them with the zealot group called the sicarii, so named for their practice of each carrying two daggers.
- How then does one explain Jesus' command, "No more of this" in the Garden? Thomas Aquinas thought that when Jesus told Peter (so named in the Gospel of John only) to put the sword away, he was speaking specifically to Peter, the rock on which the church was to be built, representing the clergy only. Others were exempt from the order to disarm.

Condemn violence: On the other hand, there have been a good number of scholars who have offered explanations that bring the first scene, which seems to condone violence, more in line with the latter, which seems to condemn violence.

- John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople from 398, wondered if the "swords" might have been knives used for cutting the lamb they had just eaten at the Passover meal.
- Or is it possible that Jesus had discovered that two of the disciples had in fact previously procured swords, indicating their lack of reliance on God, and he was here unveiling their disobedience, with his "It is enough" speaking the depth of his sorrow?
- What explanation does Jesus give in the text for his words? He speaks of the disciples' swords in light of the Isaiah prophecy he quotes. He says, "For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was counted among the lawless'; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled." The disciples being armed, their swords symbols of lawlessness rather than weapons with violent purpose, fits with this messianic prophecy, even if there are just two swords.
- Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder weighs in on these Luke 22 stories in *The Politics of Jesus*. Of the interpretations I've read, his seems to be the closest to tak-

# of the disciples

On this last evening Jesus is tempted, for the third time, to rely on force to bring in the reign of God.

ing both episodes at face value. Yoder deals dismissively with Jesus' supposed command to buy swords in a footnote that links the command to the Isaiah prophecy. Still, he does see an undercurrent of violent struggle in the sequence of events of this last night. On this last evening Jesus is tempted, for the third time, to rely on force to bring in the reign of God. The first two times were after he had fed the multitudes, and when he cleared the Temple of the money lenders. But Yoder sees the Jesus in the Garden as the true Jesus, stopping the violence and healing the victim, strengthened and renewed by his intense praying.

We have seen here a number of the many ways Christians have tried to fit these two puzzling passages together. Now do you feel invigorated? Ready to bring this Good News to the broken world for the healing of the nations? Or might there be some sense of, well, what good does all that do? What does it all mean, in the end?

Perhaps the paradox we are exploring is the paradox of the many different ways people interpret the Scriptures. This is a painful paradox, and we long for its resolution in the fulfillment of God's reign—perhaps too often longing, as well, for that moment when we will finally be declared once and for all to have been the correct interpreters.

Our interpretation of Scripture and the way we live our faith will never be fully consistent.

Deep work: There is something unseemly about this lust for validation. It is human but destructive to the humility that fosters dialogue. One significant metaphor that expresses this dynamic is that of the journey. In this life we will never completely arrive. Our interpretation of Scripture and the way we live our faith will never be fully consistent. But although we don't expect to arrive in fullness of understanding until God wipes the tears from our eyes on that day when all the nations are healed, this doesn't mean we should slouch through, kick back in our comfort and ignore what seems too hard, too opaque. We must do the deep work.

In this case, the two sword stories in Luke 22, we can look to the broad sweep of Jesus' message and see him as a peaceful teacher and healer who gave his own life rather than take another's. Jesus lived in a highly militarized society, as do we. He knew his disciples would face the swords of various authorities, and this troubled him. But did he mean that they should arm themselves and attempt to bring in the reign of God through bloodshed? In light of all he did and said, that does not make sense. We can take Jesus at his word, that he is referring to the Isaiah prophecy, and hear him saying, "It is enough" in a spirit of sadness. The disciples again caught the earthly meaning of his words but not the sense he had meant.

Yet even though they continued to misunderstand, Jesus continued to call on them. He asked them to be with him as he prayed that final night in Gethsemane. They slept. When he presented himself to his captors, his disciples broke out in the same sort of violence that was represented by the menacing weapons aimed at them. And these were the best and brightest, the hope of Jesus' heart. They failed him again and again, yet he continued to teach, lead and hope. May we also receive such grace.

Coercive tools: What strikes me most in the sword scene at the Last Supper is the disciples' eagerness to bring force into play when Jesus had never before presented it as an option. He had always taught them the opposite, in fact. They were to accept persecution for the sake of the gospel and to love their enemies. Yet when Jesus spoke of buying a sword, no one said, "But Lord, what do you mean?" No, somehow those two swords were quickly produced. This particular episode is only in Luke, but the disciple's sword in the Garden is found in all four Gospels. The disciples seem unable to fully let go of the coercive tools of the world.

I wonder: What are the swords hidden under our cloaks? To what do we respond with eager violence? When would Jesus say to us, "No more of this?" When would Jesus say, "Look closer, listen carefully—is there a better way to be part of the reign of God?"

Heidi Siemens-Rhodes is a student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and attends Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen, Ind.

'The water was up to my neck'

Steve Cheramie Risingsun is pastor of Poarch Community Church, Atmore, Ala.

Armentine Derdin cried as she shared her experience with friends and family, "The water was up to my neck." She is one of thousands in St. Bernard Parish, near New Orleans, who had to be rescued from her home following Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, St. Bernard Parish was one of the last areas to be helped, as thousands waited for nearly a week to be rescued. Armentine is a 92-year-old Native woman.

All levels of government did a poor job preparing for Katrina. And their response was too slow for those hardest hit. At crucial decision-making moments there was too much uncertainty about who was in charge and too much reluctance about financial losses and breaking jurisdictional rules.

The dreadful aftermath of Katrina has exposed personal and structural failings and weaknesses of government and society in America. It was a shocking exposé of the sharp racial divide, a rift that has been reopened, the abandonment of the dispossessed, the weakness of critical infrastructure, the failure of federal and local leaders to bring comfort and aid to its citizens in their greatest need. As Mennonites open their hearts and their wallets, I hope we will not limit our giving to agencies that only provide immediate, temporary relief but support efforts of long-term rebuilding and recovery.

I have been moved by the immediate response of Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission Network and the many individuals and congregations who have made contact with us in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and have offered prayers, concern, monetary assistance, open homes, food and clothes.

Among those of our Native Christian Fellowship in Louisiana, several have lost their homes, while others had water and roof damage. Losses include church supplies, tables, chairs and songbooks.

Three times in the last year, people from Poarch Community Church had to go through all the preparations for a hurricane, then deal with the aftermath. Ivan hit on Sept. 16, 2004. There are still 85 families with unmet housing needs in the area. Tropical Storm Cindy and Hurricane Dennis came in July. Cleanup and recovery work had not been completed before Katrina hit on Aug. 29. Katrina did minor damage to some homes and buildings in the Poarch community.

It has been difficult to respond to all the calls and emails received because of my involvement in first response and ongoing long-term effort. Thanks for words of encouragement, generous offers of assistance and prayers of protection.

Racism and injustice will continue to be exposed. Therefore, I ask our church constituency to be sensitive in their support and planned giving.

The Federal Rebuilding and Recovering Effort has spent more than $9 billion so far, with complaints already registered. Local building contractors are being ignored, while out-of-state companies receive contracts. Businesses owned by racial minority groups and women have not been invited to be part of the job-bidding process. When complaints were registered, FEMA requested a list of the local minority business owners. Leadership of the New Orleans chapter of the NAACP supplied a list. Leaders claim they have not heard back from FEMA. Haliburton has already received a large portion of the contracts.

In the massive body recovery work in the city of New Orleans, two-thirds of which are of African American decent, no licensed black morticians have been hired.

Undocumented people of Hispanic/Latino and indigenous ancestry living in the area are not eligible for federal assistance. People from New Orleans were not permitted to seek shelter by crossing into neighboring areas.

Some Mennonites and Mennonite congregations have not obtained insurance because it was so expensive. They report that in some cases it was three times what they were previously paying.

A meeting in Dallas discussed what the "new" New Orleans will look like, and some wanted a more elite population and fewer poor people.

Now that we are over the rescue effort and beginning to focus on rebuilding and recovery, we must not lose site of Katrina's long-term impact on land, water, marshes, fish and animals. Floodwater sampling reveals E coli levels higher than the EPA's recommended levels for contact.

Photos reflect the damaged homes, fallen trees, downed power lines and the blue tarp roofs. But every photo has its personal story. Life along the coast of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama has a different look, feel and sound after Katrina. We will get back to a normal life, but it'll be a different normal. When you go through what this area has experienced, it changes you.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Reaching young adults**—Katie Moyer
- **Making the church single-friendly**—Jeannette S. Buller

Everett | Thomas

Mennonite Church USA Executive Board member Leslie Francisco III (standing at right) used volunteers for an impromptu illustration of "God's Spirit" vs "God's system" to other board members, denominational staff and pastors from Ohio Mennonite Conference on Sept. 17 at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Executive Board facing budget crunch

Mennonite Publishing Network reports timely payments on its long-term debt.

Mennonite Church USA's Executive Board received sobering financial news during its meeting at Walnut Creek (Ohio) Mennonite Church Sept. 14-17. By Aug. 31, the deficit for the current fiscal year was $288,845 on an expense budget set at $1,222,020. That deficit is approximately $100,000 more than the August 2004 deficit.

"It will be hard to balance the budget unless giving increases or we make more cuts," said Jim Harder, chair of the board's church resources committee. "We will need to use some of the convention surplus from Charlotte [2005] to balance the budget."

Harder said that Executive Board income is impacted in a year when there is a national convention because "people redirect their resources" to pay for convention.

Finances were also the focus of the board's review of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), which still owes more than $3 million in long-term debt to Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

"We have a business model that is giving us sufficient income to keep pace with debt payment," said MPN's executive director Ron Rempel. "Through 2012 [MPN will pay] about $550,000 each year."

But Rempel said those payments are making it difficult to develop new products.

"While we're able to handle [the debt payments] out of operating," Rempel said, "it leaves us pretty thin for research and development."

Executive Board members asked Rempel about some recent MPN research that examined congregational buying patterns for Sunday school material. Rempel said the research revealed that most congregations have a decision-maker designated by the congregation to purchase curriculum for children and adults using the uniform lesson series.

"But in the area of youth classes and anything beyond Adult Bible Study (electives) there is noticeably less involvement by someone from the church," Rempel said.

The Provident Bookstores chain is a major source of revenue for MPN, and Executive Board members asked about their viability.

"The bookstores have an illustrious history," Rempel said, "but we're not sure how they fit into our future. There is incredible competition from Big Box stores that cream off the top [books] and sell them for what we can buy them."

Rempel also said that less than 10 percent of what Herald Press produces is sold through the Provident chain.

"The hardest letters I get are from Mennonites who find the Provident Bookstore products objectionable," Rempel said. "But I've come to the conclusion that we can't tamper with that and remain [financially] viable."

One part of each Executive Board meeting is called "listening to owners." The owners in this case were Ohio Mennonite Conference pastors and conference ministers (see photo).

The Executive Board also introduced an innovation: one or two local young adults who participate in the meeting but do not have voting privileges. Nathan Koontz of Apple Creek, Ohio, was the first to do so in this meeting.—*Everett J. Thomas*

The hardest letters I get are from Mennonites who find the Provident Bookstore products objectionable.—Ron Rempel

New Orleans churches lose everything

Eastern Mennonite Missions reports status of congregations after hurricane.

As news of Hurricane Katrina's devastation poured in, Eastern Mennonite Missions leaders contacted partners and related church plants in the region, beginning discussion of possible long-term EMM response. Leonard Burkholder, ethnic group church planting consultant for EMM, contacted Thomas and Victoria Trieu, a Vietnamese couple in Biloxi, Miss.

The Trieus moved to the Biloxi region several years ago to serve the more than 25,000 Vietnamese who have settled along the Gulf Coast. Burkholder reported that the Trieus' office has been completely destroyed and their home severely damaged. Currently Victoria and their year-old son are living with relatives in California. Thomas has returned to the Biloxi region to assist with medical needs, cleanup and recovery.

Last May, Burkholder visited New Orleans and a Garifuna church plant in the eastern part of the city. Uvencio Arzu, a pastor with roots in the Garifuna community of Honduras, had moved five years ago from the Bronx Evangelical Garifuna Church (a member of the New York District of Lancaster Mennonite Conference) to begin the Evangelical Garifuna Church of New Orleans.

Arzu was in New York City with his family when the hurricane hit. He has little news from the 20 to 30 people associated with the congregation or the fate of his home, where the church had been meeting. It is the first evangelical Garifuna church in New Orleans.

EMM also has links to an Amor Viviente congregation in New Orleans. The congregation is a member of the Gulf States Mennonite Conference in Mennonite Church USA. Javier Soler, missions leader for Amor Viviente churches in Honduras, says church members from New Orleans fled to Houston or Tampa. Most are accounted for.

The international network of Amor Viviente churches is planning to take up an offering to assist the New Orleans church—its first international church plant—founded 20 years ago by Hector Urbina and Ed King. The church most likely has lost its building.

"We know because of the consequences that nothing is going to be easy," says Amor Viviente's pastoral couple Karl and Marlene Bernhard, who fled to Houston. "We will all come back to the city one day, but there won't be jobs, and the homes probably will be found destroyed or very much damaged. In the meantime, we know God is also going to open doors wherever we are to make our way, and we will survive with his strength and his help. Last Saturday we met in Houston. This may be the first seed to plant a new church in that city."

"It's important to work for spiritual rebuilding as well as physical," says Burkholder. "Ten years from now I'd love to see healthy Vietnamese, Chinese, Laotian and other churches emerging from this rubble," he says.

EMM opened a hurricane relief account to receive funds from people who wish to support EMM in its work with southern partners, for long-term physical and spiritual rebuilding. Undesignated contributions given via www.emm.org during September supported Hurricane Katrina-related rebuilding.—*Jewel Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions*

We will all come back to the city one day, but there won't be jobs, and the homes probably will be found destroyed or very much damaged.
—Karl and Marlene Bernhard

God is still there

Becky Oberg, a member of First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis, joined an ecumenical work team for several days in Biloxi, Miss., in mid-September. She took this photo (right) of a car submerged in rubble.

"God is still there," Oberg says. "God was there when a 74-year-old woman and her 11 older friends climbed into an attic [where they waited] for five hours before the flood waters receded."

Another evidence: humor.

"God was in the heart (and humor) of the person whose house was washed into the street," Oberg says, "who responded by posting a sign reading, 'Jesus Saves. Keep the Faith. Houseboat for sale—$100.'"
—Everett J. Thomas

Becky Oberg

MMA's new leader, Nagelvoort, resigns

Resignation comes after MMA board learns of personal bankruptcy filing.

Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag (right) and MMA board chair Carol Suter (left) introduce Skip and Mary Nagelvoort to Charlotte 2005 delegates on July 6.

The MMA board of directors accepted the resignation of president and chief executive officer Terry L. "Skip" Nagelvoort on Sept. 21. The resignation, which was effective immediately, followed a disclosure that Nagelvoort filed for personal bankruptcy protection in June, shortly before he was named president of MMA on July 4.

Steve Garboden, MMA's senior vice president of health services and administrative services, assumes the position of acting president and CEO during the transition per the MMA board's CEO succession policy. Garboden has been with MMA for 29 years and lives in Goshen, Ind., where MMA has its corporate headquarters.

"The MMA board and leadership team are committed to continuing the quality products and services that people have come to expect," said Garboden in a statement released by MMA on Sept. 23. "We will not be distracted from fulfilling our mission and purpose in the days ahead. MMA welcomes thoughts and prayers for the staff and leadership of MMA as the board seeks to respond with wisdom and integrity."

Garboden would not comment on the reasons for Nagelvoort's resignation, citing personnel confidentiality policies. However, Garboden said that Federal Trade Commission rules do not preclude a person who has filed for personal bankruptcy from serving as chair of the MMA Praxis board or any other function as MMA president.

According to an article written by Robert Rhodes and published on the *Mennonite Weekly Review* Web site Sept. 27, Nagelvoort filed for bankruptcy in Michigan on June 29, citing $9.1 million in liabilities and less than $50,000 in assets.

"MMA officials and a search committee that recruited Nagelvoort were not aware of his pending bankruptcy until after he had started work at MMA," Rhodes wrote.

The search committee for MMA's new president included Mennonite Church USA executive director Jim Schrag and Executive Board member Jim Harder. Schrag and MMA board chair Carol Suter introduced Nagelvoort to the Executive Board on July 4, at which time the Executive Board approved his appointment.

Garboden

"In my role as executive director of Mennonite Church USA ," said Schrag when asked to comment on Nagelvoort's resignation, "I may not divulge confidential information that is related to either a search process or personnel matters of any CEO of any agency of Mennonite Church USA."

Nagelvoort officially began as MMA's president and CEO on Aug. 1. He succeeded Howard Brenneman, who retired July 31, after serving for 14 years as MMA's president and CEO.

"[MMA's] financial results for the first half of 2005 were more positive than expected" Nagelvoort said in his first report to the Executive Board, which met Sept. 14-17 (see page 19), "with total equity growing nearly $5 million to $86 million."
—Everett J. Thomas

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Sister-Link connects U.S., African women

Mennonite Women USA partner with African Women Theologians until 2009.

Sensing the call of God's Spirit, Mennonite Women USA (MW USA) has begun a new relationship with a group of African women theologians, a new partnership between African and North American women.

In November 2004, a committee of women church leaders from five African countries—the African Women Theologians (AWT) group—met in Nairobi, Kenya. Among the goals they set was that by 2009, the year of the next Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly, at least 20 additional Mennonite and Brethren in Christ women across Africa will be trained in theology.

"It seemed like we might be a relatively good fit as a partnering agency that could work with these women in reaching their goals," says Rhoda Keener, executive director for MW USA.

"We're familiar with scholarship work," says Keener, "because of our decades-old International Women's Fund, and three years ago MW USA launched Sister-Link, a program that connects women across geographical and cultural divides. But entering into the vision of these African sisters would require taking Sister-Link into a new dimension."

A new Sister-Link is now under way. It encompasses three parts.

First, Keener will correspond with the AWT leaders, talking about ways this group can develop and implement their vision for ministry.

Second, Sylvia Shirk Charles, Goshen, Ind., is coordinating one-on-one pen pal connections between seven AWT leaders and seven North American pastors, theologians and theology students. The hope is to develop friendships, share theological ideas and writings, and support one another as women leaders in the church.

Third, Mennonite Women USA will assist in the collection of funds for scholarships for African women to attend their local theological schools. These funds will be separate from MW USA's budget and ongoing International Women's Fund program, although the MW USA board of directors has designated about $7,000 as seed money. AWT leaders will select the scholarship recipients, and MWC is helping with dispersal.

Sister-Link is intended to last from now until the 2009 MWC assembly in Paraguay, when participants will meet face to face and evaluate future direction.

"This project … feels like a major commitment for us and a real leap of faith," Keener says, "but we're thrilled to imagine what God might accomplish for the church and the world through this five-year partnership."

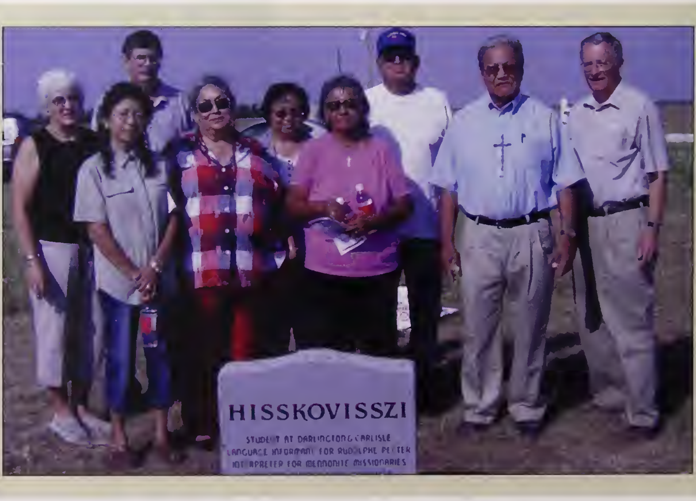
"I am indeed excited about one-on-one pen pal communications," says AWT secretary Rebecca Osiro, "especially [regarding] common theological issues that might arise in a cross-cultural setting."

MWC has worked with the African women for five or six years, says staff member Tim Lind.

"But we are not a programming agency, and we have always seen our role as one of making connections between our members rather than doing things on their behalf," Lind says.—*Cathleen Hockman-Wert, editor of* Timbrel

I am indeed excited about … common theological issues that might arise in a cross-cultural setting.
—Rebecca Osiro

Grave marker dedicated for Harvey White Shield


HISSKOVISSZI
STUDENT AT DARLINGTON & CARLISLE
LANGUAGE INFORMANT FOR RUDOLPHE PETTER
INTERPRETER FOR MENNONITE MISSIONARIES

John E. Sharp

A long delayed grave marker for Harvey White Shield (1860-1941) was dedicated Sept. 24 at the Cantonment cemetery near Canton, Okla. White Shield was a Cheyenne Mennonite lay minister, interpreter, language informant for Rudolph Petter, schoolteacher and hymn composer. He composed the hymn "Father God, You are Holy" (#78 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*). Attending the ceremony were (from left) Betty Hart, Sandra Littleman, Roger Juhnke, Ada Littleman, Leona Whiteshield, Rosa Whiteshield, Albert Littleman, Lawrence Hart, Jim Juhnke and John Sharp (not pictured).—*John E. Sharp*

Benin single women devalued by culture

Women take leadership positions in church with too few trained leaders.

Nancy Frey

Jeanne Monhounde, a leader in ministry to single women, prays with a seminar participant at Benin Bible Institute.

"Why, after three years of praying together, has the Lord not answered our prayers for husbands?" asks Olga Akloubou, a graduate of Institut Biblique au Bénin (Benin Bible Institute, BBI).

Her question voices the frustration of her five single, female colleagues gathered to support each other in clinging to their faith despite the cloak of shame their culture throws over them.

Single women hurdle tremendous barriers in responding to God's call to serve the church in Benin. Many African ethnic groups consider a female nearly worthless until she marries and bears children.

However, as female students at BBI read the Bible for themselves, they can discover that God loves them whether or not they have a husband and children. The Bible also tells them not to bury their talents.

So, in a country where church growth far exceeds the number of trained pastors, women are increasingly stepping into leadership positions.

According to Nancy Frey of Mennonite Mission Network, BBI has the highest percentage of female students in its history, with 40 women in the current class of 200. These women—wives, mothers, singles and widows—span several generations.

Although the Beninese churches have begun to value the gifts women contribute to congregational life, these ministries still tend to remain hidden in back rooms where prayer takes place, under trees where children are taught, in homes where the sick are comforted or in kitchens where meals are prepared.

"Women's leadership roles don't necessarily put them at the front of the church," Frey says.

Frey, who has shared administrative and teaching responsibilities with Beninese staff at BBI since 2000, seeks ways to affirm and empower her single West African sisters in Christ.

In 2003, she began meeting with single, professional women for Bible study and prayer. In May of that year, this nucleus organized a seminar based on the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31, emphasizing that women have worth beyond their roles as wives and mothers. The 270 women who attended indicated that this topic addressed a perceived need in the wider Christian community. In the past two years, BBI has sponsored four more seminars dealing with subjects related to singleness: its causes, the personality and spirituality of the single woman.

Participation has waned as women realize that the seminars validate a single lifestyle rather than presenting steps to acquiring a husband.

"Women don't want to accept singleness," Frey says. "The women want fast solutions. They want to see a miracle. They want a powerful spiritual leader to pray for them so that this happens. I can't give them that. My biggest hope is that the church will find a place for single women," Frey says.

Frey has served in Benin with her husband, Bruce Yoder, since 2000. They have two children—Jeremiah, 6, and Deborah, 4—and are jointly supported by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness.—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Conference seeking peace draws 350

Gathering brings MC USA, Church of the Brethren, The Society of Friends

When 350 participants gathered Sept. 8-11 for a conference of the historic peace churches—Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church USA and The Society of Friends—they focused on what it means to be courageous in the current political environment: letting go of fear and bringing light to the darkness.

Called "Seeking Peace: the Courage to Be Nonviolent," the conference included speakers, workshops and worship and met at the Indianapolis Marriott East conference center. It was an ecumenical gathering, with participants primarily from the three historic peace churches.

"The purpose of this gathering was to bring the peace and justice leadership and peace activists in the historic peace churches together," said Dean Johnson, director of the Plowshares Peace Studies Program at Goshen (Ind.) College and one of the conference organizers.

Peggy Gish, a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams since the early 1990s and recently returned from a delegation to Baghdad, spoke during a plenary session about putting aside her own fears when she felt called to go to Iraq.

"Almost everyone in Iraq has been affected by a death, wounded family member or disappeared relatives," said Gish. "Fear has permeated Iraq and our lives as well. Fear is the driving force of our foreign policy."

During a plenary lecture, Lisa Schirch, associate professor of peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., said her understanding of activism has been challenged in the past year by a trip to Iraq and an opportunity she had to speak at West Point Military Academy.

"What we need to be proactively doing is changing the structures around us," said Schirch. "Pacifism might be redefined as steps to bring about change."

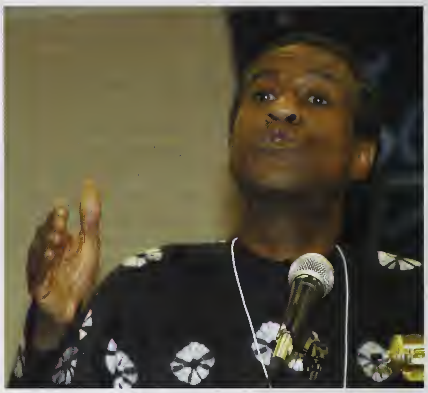
> We need to be proactively … changing the structures around us. Pacifism might be redefined as steps to bring about change.
> —Lisa Schirch

She suggested considering a saying of St. Francis of Assisi: Preach the gospel always. When necessary use words.

Schirch then outlined four suggestions to aid those who work for justice through advocacy. First, frame the message so that all can understand, using positive language. Second, share the facts. Third, use messages that consider a person's neighbor and their needs, using metaphors if necessary. Fourth, engage in active peacebuilding by advocating for justice, reducing direct violence, transforming relationship dynamics and building capacity.

Damu Smith, co-founder and director of Black Voices for Peace, said during his plenary lecture, "We must be brave and speak the truth."

Tying in his own battle with cancer, Smith used metaphors to make his points.



Joel Fath

Damu Smith, co-founder and director of Black Voices for Peace, believes the church has a decisive role to play in bringing peace and justice to our world. "I am very disturbed by the new expressions of religion that neuter the revolutionary spirit of Jesus Christ," said Smith.

"Oh people of God, we have so much work to do in our land to cure the cancer of systemic injustice," said Smith. "We have to cleanse ourselves. There must be justice in our interpersonal relationships."

Smith also called for faith-based peace activism to better include minorities.

"This is my dream," Smith said. "When we have an assembly like this, I don't want to see all white [people]. I want it be a multiracial event. We gonna listen to each other's music. We gonna hug each other and cry. We gonna build a multiracial, multi-cultural movement to root out the source of injustice."

In the final worship session on Sunday morning, Gene Stoltzfus, former director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, using humor and drama, talked about darkness and light, good winning over evil.

"We have to find ways to bless each other," said Stoltzfus. "Light is not the opposite of darkness, light is the absence of darkness. We are the children of the enlightenment and we expect some truth. When you bring the darkness to the light it fails. Be bold and carry the light. Let's live like we have the confidence of this: Darkness can't put the light out."

The Plowshares Peace Studies Project is a collaboration of three historic peace church colleges: Goshen, Manchester (Ind.) and Earlham (Richmond, Ind.). The project is funded by a $13.9 million Lilly grant given to the three schools in July 2002.—*Joel Fath of Goshen College*

New global fellowship continues plans

Mennonite World Conference and mission group are sorting out relationship.

When the Global Mission Fellowship of Anabaptist-related Churches gathers in Almaty, Kazakhstan, a year from now, it will meet under the theme "Emerging Mission: from All Churches to All People." This was one decision made by the GMF planning committee when it met Aug. 9-13 in Waterloo, Ont.

The Global Mission Fellowship will join the Turkic Altai, a conference on missions to Turkic peoples, for some of its sessions.

Speakers and Bible study leaders will include Wilbert Shenk (USA), Danisa Ndlovu (Zimbabwe) and Shekar Singh (India). Workshops, networking, reports from regional caucuses, a business meeting, prayer and worship times, and closing Communion will fill out the agenda for the gathering.

The planning committee, meeting in conjunction with Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee meetings in Waterloo, discussed its future relationship with MWC.

A proposal for the membership and organization of MWC—which will be presented to the MWC General Council in March 2006—would create a new framework for the GMF-MWC relationship. After the MWC General Council takes action on the broader proposal, the GMF planning committee will draft a recommendation on the GMF-MWC relationship and circulate it to GMF members in advance of the 2006 GMF gathering.

In other business the GMF planning committee drafted commitments on consultation and cooperation on new mission efforts among GMF members. GMF members will be encouraged to work with other Anabaptist-related mission groups already active in or near a location of proposed new mission efforts.

This meeting was the first for Siaka Traoré from Burkina Faso, the new representative from Africa. Representatives from each region reported on developments toward forming regional mission fellowships and promoting the GMF.

In Latin America, Europe and North America, the regional representatives have met with mission and church leaders, but in Asia and Africa such meetings have not been possible in the past year.

The committee discussed ways of connecting to existing and new global mission networks among Anabaptist-related groups, in particular the International Mission Association initiated by Eastern Mennonite Missions and the Global Mission Alliance initiated by the International Committee of Mennonite Brethren.

The committee is searching for a replacement for Peter Rempel, who has resigned as planning assistant. Rempel will begin a full-time position with Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba on Nov. 1.

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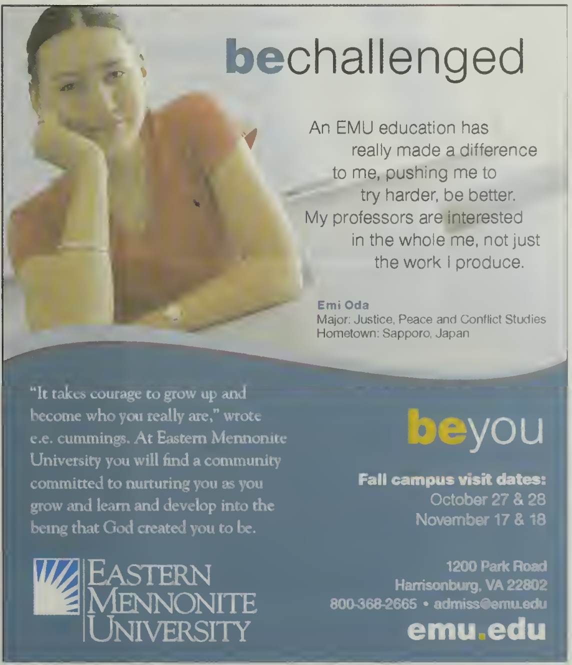
GMF planning committee (left to right): Janet Plenert, Emmanuel Minj, Siaka Traoré, Javier Soler, Peter Rempel, Johannes Reimer, Eddy Sutjipto, Larry Miller.

The GMF planning committee will need to raise $30,000 to $40,000 each year in addition to expected contributions, based on initial projections of meeting costs.

Up to June 30, the GMF Fund had received $17,158.09 in fair share contributions from members and interest and expended $7,162.78.—*Global Mission Fellowship release distributed by Mennonite World Conference*


bechallenged

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Emi Oda
Major: Justice, Peace and Conflict Studies
Hometown: Sapporo, Japan

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beyou

Fall campus visit dates:
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CALENDAR

Celtic Spirituality Pilgrimage, June 8-26, 2006. Come and join other pilgrims on a journey next summer to ancient, medieval and modern centers of Celtic spirituality. Sponsored by **AMBS**. For more information contact Bev Sawatzky at 574-296-6207 or email bsawatzky@ambs.edu.

30th Annual Rocky Mountain Mennonite Relief Sale and Auction, Oct. 14-15, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds, Rocky Ford, Colo. Opening program Oct. 14 at 7 p.m., "Celebrate Our 30 Years with Singing and Remembering." All proceeds go directly to meet human needs throughout the world through the work of **Mennonite Central Committee**. For more information call 719-384-7914 or 719-481-2527 or visit www.rmmcsale.org.

The Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center will sponsor a ***Harvest Day*** on Sat. Oct. 15, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 711 Garbers Church Road, Harrisonburg, Va. Enjoy old-time fun for everyone. Only $8 a carload.

Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, ***50th Anniversary Celebration***, Nov. 5 and 6. Saturday evening hog roast at 5 p.m. followed by a program at 6:30. Sunday morning worship at 9:30 a.m. with sermon by Ellis Croyle (pastor 1961-95). Noon potluck lunch to follow. All former members and friends are invited. For more information, contact 419-445-3796, email zinomc@bright.net or visit the Web site www.zion.oh.us.mennonite.net.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St.,
Goshen, IN 46526-4794

WORKERS

Beck, Duane, ended Sept. 11 as pastor at Belmont Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Belousek, Paula Snyder, was licensed Sept. 11 as associate pastor at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Schrock, John, began Sept. 1 as pastor at Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Benson, Clare Elizabeth, Aug. 9, to Travis and Kelly Crilow Benson, S.D.

Clemmer, Adelyn Brooke, Sept. 1, to Nathaneal and Brooke Steury Clemmer, Souderton, Pa.

Forrey, Aubrie Marie, Sept. 7, to K. Matthew and Tammy Wenger Forrey, Lancaster, Pa.

Householter, Jenna Nicole, July 21, to Ben and Dena Ramer Householter, Elkhart, Ind.

Hurst, Shawna Elisabeth, Aug. 29, to Micah and Carla Rempel Hurst, Ulverstone, Australia.

King, Andrew, Sept. 4, to Tillman and Jennifer Yoder King, Goshen, Ind.

Klopfenstein, Hollyn Marie, Sept. 7, to Tim and Stephanie Klopfenstein, Wapakaneta, Ohio.

Kozel, Jude Walker, Aug. 11, to Nick and Deanna Steiner Kozel, Harrisonburg, Va.

Landis, Joella Marie, Sept. 6, to Jamy and Lisa Ashby Landis, Sutton, Ala.

Martens, Alexander Jacob, Aug. 25, to Jacob and Heather Lawson Martens, Corvallis, Ore.

Miller, Derek Kenneth, Aug. 12, to Evan and Elizabeth McCusker Miller, Denver, Colo.

Mullet, Isabel Ann, Aug. 13, to Keith and Elizabeth Grace Mullet, Denver, Colo.

Ordenana, Jessenia Lynn, Aug. 25, to Jairo and Lindsay Reiff Ordenana, Lansdale, Pa.

O'Rourke, Emily Michelle, Aug. 23, to Russell and Michelle Greiser O'Rourke, Telford, Pa.

Sharp, Gabriella Marie, Aug. 31, to Michael and Kristin Beeley Sharp, Manheim, Pa.

Staker, Anita Christine, July 3, to Steven and Lara Liams Staker, Junction City, Kan.

Strader, Calvin Clay, Sept. 7, to Eric and Laura Strader, Goshen, Ind.

Trick, Sarah Grace, Sept. 2, to Dave and Tanya Slabach Trick, Goshen, Ind.

Unruh, Corey Zhang Lin, April 29, to Kent Unruh and Jeanette Lim, Seattle, Wa.

Weisheit, Sara Nicole, Sept. 9, to Darwin and Cheryl Barnhill Weisheit, Henderson, Neb.

Wilson, Bennett William, Sept. 3, to Shaun and Megan Miller Wilson, Indianapolis.

Woodhouse, Owen Levi, Aug. 20, to Brent and Karen Keefer Woodhouse, Farmingdale, N.Y.

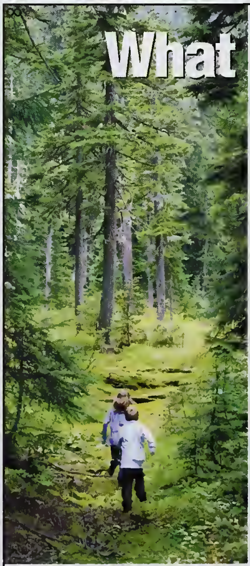
Yutzy, Christopher Lloyd and Cameron Michael (twins), Aug. 28, to Michael and Tina Doell Yutzy, Wichita, Kan.

MARRIAGES

Litwiller/Naumer: Craig Litwiller, Woodridge, Ill., and Kristy Naumer, Woodridge, Ill., Aug. 26 at Wayside Chapel at the Center, Palos Hills, Ill.

DEATHS

Enck, Elizabeth (Betty) Herr Thomas, 98, Lititz, Pa., died Aug. 30. Spouse: Frank M. Enck (deceased). Parents: Elmer B. and Mary Herr Thomas. Children: Daniel, Mary Reitz, Jesse, Anna Lois Shertzer, Miriam Progner; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Landis Homes West Bethany Chapel, Lititz.



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Gingerich, Jeremiah (Jerry), 94, Bruneau, Idaho, died Sept. 2. Spouse: Letha Slatter Gingerich (deceased). Parents: Christian and Mary Zehr Gingerich. Children: Kermit, Verlin, Mary Beth King, Donell, Dolores Brubaker, Rudy; 16 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at American Church, Bruneau.

Graybill, Elta M., 92, Martinsburg, Pa., died Sept. 1. Parents: Clayton and Bertha Graybill. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Martinsburg Mennonite Church.

Heyerly, Mabel Stutzman, 93, Albany, Ore., died Sept. 10. Spouse: Ernest H. Heyerly (deceased). Parents: Ira and Mary Boshart Stutzman. Children: Mary Lee Strong, John, Daniel; seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Albany Mennonite Church.

Jantz, Sadie M., 91, Moundridge, Kan., died July 3. Spouse: Melvin Jantz. Parents: Louie and Mary Wedel Decker. Children: Dwight, Merle, Royce, Mary Ford. Funeral: July 7 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Knicely, Frank Shank, 88, Harrisonburg, Va., died Aug. 21. Spouse: (1st) Ruby Burkholder Knicely (deceased), (2nd) Ruth Ketterman Knicely. Parents: Joseph L. and Bertha Shank Knicely. Child: Fred; step-children Allen Ketterman, Richard Ketterman, Karen Elliot; three grandchildren; three step-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 24 at Weavers Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Krabill, Russell Roth, 88, Goshen, Ind., died July 16. Spouse: Mary Elizabeth Hiestand. Parents: Elmer and Mary Ann Roth Krabill. Children: Mary Ann Hollinger, James Russell; five grandchildren. Funeral: July 20 at Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Longenecker, J. Howard, 87, Elizabethtown, Pa., died Aug. 13. Spouse: Pearl G. Longenecker. Parents: Phares B. and Kathryn H. Longenecker. Children: Reba Crill, Darlene Landis, Glen; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 17 at Bossler Mennonite Church, Elizabethtown.

Martin, Harvey S., 80, Elmira, Ont., died Aug. 25. Spouse: Ermina Martin. Parents: Daniel and Lucinda Snyder Martin. Children: Keith, Karen Moore, Gloria, Glen, Collin, Carol Weber, Roger, Reta Sauder, Tim, Tracey Deihl; 22 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 29 at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

Martin, Marjorie Shantz, 90, Orrville, Ohio, died Aug. 19 of cancer. Spouse: Phares D. Martin (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Myra Snyder Shantz. Stepchildren: Alice, Grace, Wesley, Lois Zimmerly, Ralph, Caolyn Swartzendruber, Velma Souder; 21 step-grandchildren; 52 step-great-grandchildren; 10 step-great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 22 at Crown Hill Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Miller, Jakob Levi, 32, Scottdale, Pa., died Aug. 23. Parents: Levi and Gloria Miller. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Scottdale Mennonite Church.

Morningstar, Ora A., 88, Goshen, Ind., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Dorothy Klopfenstein Morningstar. Parents: Lewis and Fannie Kauffman Morningstar. Children: Allen, Jenni Kauffman, Tim; eight grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Clinton Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Plank, Annie, 93, Sarasota, Fla., died Sept. 1 of congestive heart failure. Spouse: Menno Plank (deceased). Children: Clara Wood, Irene Beachy, Joe, Clarence, Ken; 15 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 6 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Riegsecker, Nancy Short, 70, Archbold, Ohio, died Sept. 12. Spouse: Marlin Riegsecker. Parents: Jesse and Lucille Short. Children: Timothy, Laura, Jeff, Joel; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17.

Rogers-Martin, Gabriella Rose, 14, Richfield, Minn., died Sept. 3 in her sleep. Parents: Darrell Martin and Rena Rogers. Funeral: Sept. 4 at Nokomis Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

Schmidt, Arvid John, 60, Wichita, Kan., died Sept. 6. Parents: Simon and Martha Koehn Schmidt. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Sommers, Dean, 79, Canton, Ohio, died Sept. 8. Spouse: Vivian Sommers. Parents: Harvey and Mary Ann Sommers. Children: Cheryl VanHorn, Lola Conway, Ila Peffer, Mary, Denise; 10 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 12 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville, Ohio.

Troyer, Francis C., 89, Goshen, Ind., died Aug. 10. Spouse: Shirley Holaway Troyer. Parents: Jerry C. and Lizzie Mishler Troyer. Children: Eric L., Kristin F. Ems, Ingrid S. Eash, H. Yvonne Troyer Mayer; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; two step-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 14 at Prairie St. Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Widrick, Nelson, 89, Lowville, N.Y., died Aug. 14. Spouse: Esther Widrick (deceased). Parents: Joseph and Catherine Yousey Widrick. Children: Arlon, Willard, Kren Villiem, Patrina Ashley, Elton (deceased); nine grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Croghan (N.Y.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Mildred Loechner, 92, Springs, Pa., died Aug. 31. Spouse: Ivan M. Yoder (deceased). Father: William Loechner. Children: Earl, Loretta Bender, Jean Maust, Richard, Delmas; 12 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 3 at Springs Mennonite Church.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

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Dock Woods Community, a continuing-care retirement community located in Lansdale, Pa., is seeking applicants for ***director of marketing***. This position is responsible for directing the marketing functions and strategies for all levels of care in Dock Woods Community. The position entails spending a great deal of time interacting with perspective residents, residents and family members. Candidates must possess strong interpersonal and organizational skills as well as 3-5 years of demonstrated leadership abilities.

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We are seeking a ***marketing and sales representative*** in central Pennsylvania to develop and grow MAX locally and throughout the state. Responsibilities are varied, including public relations; working with Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ and other Anabaptist denomination pastors and congregations to present MAX, and providing insurance products to individuals and businesses. Competitive compensation and benefit package. Fax or email resume to Sharon Wine at 877-785-0085 or skwine@maxkc.com. To learn more about MAX, visit www.mutualaidexchange.com.

Goshen College has openings for a ***full-time assistant professor in special education and an assistant professor in secondary education*** to begin July 2006. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page, www.goshen.edu/employment/.

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Mennonite Disaster Service in Akron, Pa., is seeking an ***assistant coordinator*** to begin in December. Responsibilities include recruiting for long-term volunteers, developing a new voluntary service program, assisting in special projects. For complete job description see http://mds.mennonite.net/Home/Resources. Send resumé to MDS, attention: AC position, 1018 Main St., Akron, PA 17501, or email kking@mds.mennonite.net. Applications close Oct. 31.

Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership Team is seeking a ***full-time associate director of convention planning*** to join the Elkhart, Ind., office.

In this role the candidate will give leadership to the churchwide youth convention, children's convention and/or young adult convention held every two years. The candidate will be expected to connect with youth and young adult ministries on behalf of Mennonite Church USA. Additionally, based on prior experience, current skills or aptitude, the candidate will oversee negotiations with vendors such as the caterer, audiovisual company, decorator, transportation company and housing company, just to name a few.

The ideal candidate will be committed to serving God through Mennonite Church USA, passionate about youth ministry issues in Mennonite Church USA and able to support and affirm the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective. Ideally (but not required) the candidate will be a graduate of a Mennonite college, university or seminary. Additionally, the candidate will have experience in the following areas: working with youth and sponsors, speaking in public, leading meetings, proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point.

Moreover, the candidate will also be able to lead effectively, communicate well both in writing and speaking, demonstrate flexibility, demonstrate exceptional organizational skills, pay attention to details without losing sight of the big picture, travel up to 25 percent of the time, work well as part of a team, work well under pressure. Finally, the candidate will have the aptitude and intellectual capacity to develop sharp negotiating skills, think critically about youth ministry trends and learn about the meetings industry.

Please send your resumé in total confidence along with the names and phone numbers of four references (your pastor, a peer, your current or former employer and a fourth person of your choice). Send to Jorge Vallejos, Director of Convention Planning, c/o Carol Epp, P.O. Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245 or email carole@MennoniteUSA.org. Position will close on Oct. 14, 2005.

Director of libraries. Provide leadership and coordination to planning, budgeting, organizing and staffing the library. MLS required. A graduate degree in another discipline preferred. Theological studies essential. **EMU** seeks people who are supportive of Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian faith practices. Candidates send letter of application, vitae, transcripts and three references to Beryl Brubaker, Provost, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email provost@emu.edu. Position open immediately. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit our Web site, www.emu.edu/humanresources/vacancy/allopen.html.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking applicants for the position of ***director of finance/controller***. This full-time position is responsible for the operation of the Business Office, including accounting and financial reporting functions, receivables (student accounts and loans), purchasing and payables, payroll, internal control systems and banking. Bachelor's degree in accounting or business management required with a master's degree in business administration desired; CPA or CMA preferred. Must have a minimum of five years experience related to accounting, financial management, budgeting and planning. Experience with Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Access, Word and PowerPoint), as well as an understanding of use of database files required. Auditing experience desired. Applications will be reviewed immediately and will be open until filled. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-4108 or hr@emu.edu. People who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity are encouraged to apply.

RESOURCES

Holy Teaching: Introducing the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas by Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt (Brazos Press, 2005, $27.99) presents selections from the *Summa theologiae*, along with commentary that unpacks and places the selections in context. Acquinas begins the *Summa* by proving the need for theology, then examines the attributes of God, vexing questions about living the Christian life, a study of the two natures of Christ and the nature and purpose of the sacraments.

Spiritual Writings on Mary: Annotated and Explained by Mary Ford-Grabowsky (Sky Light Paths, 2005, $16.99) explores a collection of writings on Mary dating from the time of the Hebrew Bible prophecies to the present.

The Mystical Language of Icons by Solrun Nes (Eerdmans, 2005, $30) explains through words and pictures the history, meaning and purpose of Christian icons as well as traditional methods that religious painters use to create these luminous, spiritually enlivened works of art.

Creed Without Chaos: Exploring Theology in the Writings of Dorothy L. Sayers by Laura K. Simmons (BakerAcademic, 2005, $19.99) provides a theological rather than literary introduction to the writings of a contemporary of C.S. Lewis who has been called "the most significant female British Christian intellectual of the 20th century."

Call Me the Seeker: Listening to Religion in Popular Music, edited by Michael J. Gilmour (Continuum, 2005, $24.95) features essays on a wide range of musical styles, from heavy metal, techno and rap to country, jazz and broadway musicals.

The Heart of God: Praying the Scriptures to Expand Your Vision by Kenneth Boa (Baker Books, 2005, $10.99) is a pocket-sized devotional that helps readers grow in the art of prayer. Each of the 90 daily entries consists of seven essential prayer types: praise and worship, personal examination, prayer of commitment, personal concerns, concerns for others, thanksgiving and concluding prayer.

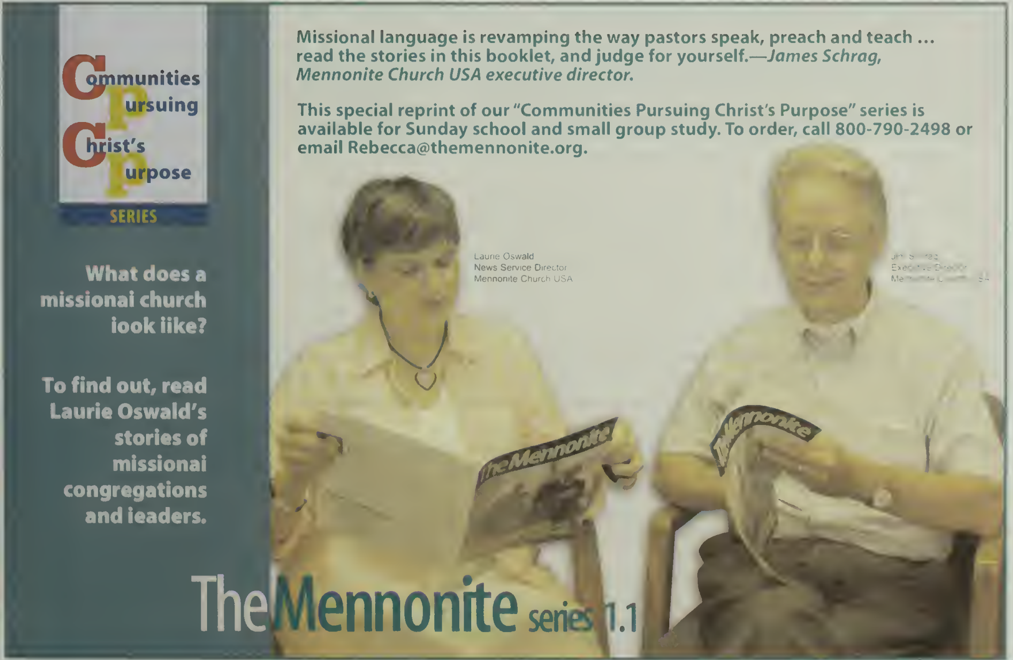
Born Again and Again: The Surprising Gifts of a Fundamentalist Childhood by Jon Sweeney (Paraclete Press, 2005, $19.95) explores aspects of Christian fundamentalism not usually seen: the mysticism of God indwelling the body; religious certainty and its positive and negative effects; powerful experiences of worship, community and trust; and the importance of struggling with matters of faith until they are one's own.

The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami? by David Bentley Hart (Eerdmans, 2005, $14) contends that the history of suffering and death is not willed by God. (See Mediaculture, Sept. 20.)

Companions of Christ: Ignatian Spirituality for Everyday Living by Margaret Silf (Eerdmans, 2005, $12) unearths the gold mine of spiritual wisdom in the legacy of Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits.

Transforming Care: A Christian Vision of Nursing Practice by Mary Molewyk Doornbos, Ruth E. Groenhout and Kendra G. Hotz (Eerdmans, 2005, $18) addresses the question of how Christian faith molds nursing practice. It provides discussion of such crises as the nursing shortage and the variety of difficult situations that cause nurses to leave the profession.

Caleb and Shalev by Max Ediger (Interfaith Cooperation Forum, 2005) is a children's story of a little disabled boy who gives his one love, a disabled lamb, to the Christ Child after risking abuse to travel to Bethlehem.



Missional language is revamping the way pastors speak, preach and teach ... read the stories in this booklet, and judge for yourself.—*James Schrag, Mennonite Church USA executive director.*

This special reprint of our "Communities Pursuing Christ's Purpose" series is available for Sunday school and small group study. To order, call 800-790-2498 or email Rebecca@themennonite.org.

What does a missional church look like?

To find out, read Laurie Oswald's stories of missional congregations and leaders.

TheMennonite series 1.1

Mediation over litigation

Joseph Kotva

Timothy Jost

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. If you have issues you want to see addressed, write Joseph Kotva, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999, or jkotva@ambs.edu. Also go to www.anabaptist-ethics.org.

Mennonites have long avoided litigation. Jesus' teachings of nonresistance, turning the other cheek and offering one's cloak also when sued for one's coat (Matthew 5:29-40) seem to rule out the use of the courts. Paul's correction of the church in Corinth suggests much the same but adds the element of the church's involvement: "When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead of taking it before the saints?" (1 Corinthians 6:1).

Paul here recognizes there will be wrongs that need settling, even between believers, but he objects to the use of the courts as the mechanism for resolving those differences. We should instead accept being wronged or involve the church (1 Corinthians 6:1-7). This advice fits with the pattern in Matthew 18: The process is geared toward reconciliation and builds gradually, first going to the offending brother or sister, then, if necessary, getting other Christians involved, then, as a final resort, going to the larger church for justice (Matthew 18:15-20). But what do these biblical principles mean in the context of medical negligence?

The issues surrounding medical negligence and malpractice litigation provide the church an opportunity to be a light to the world, a city built on a hill (Matthew 5:14). Here is an opportunity to show what we have learned from Scripture and from victim-offender reconciliation and restorative justice programs. Christian patients and physicians alike must treat each other with respect and honor. Being in a position of power, the physician in particular has a special obligation to listen empathetically and to imagine how things look and feel from the patient's position. Once a medical injury occurs, Christian patients must show enough patience to seek out their physicians for an explanation. Conversely, the Christian doctor must try to maintain a relationship with the patient, acknowledging the injury, explaining what happened, how it happened and what is being done to avoid it happening again. The doctor must listen to the patient and acknowledge the patient's feelings (as well as his or her own feelings). If appropriate, the doctor should apologize for the injury.

Victims of medical mistakes, like other victims, want a restored sense of safety, answers to questions, a cathartic chance to tell about their experience and the effect it has had on them and their family, a renewed sense of empowerment and some kind of vindication, which may be restitution or assurance that the error will not happen again. Moreover, a concrete process is needed to allow these steps to happen. When both the physician and patient are Christians, they must treat each other as brothers or sisters and the church should facilitate this process of restoration.

Not surprisingly, recent studies show the wisdom of such approaches. Patients sue for various reasons, such as feeling that the doctor is not being honest with them or because they were not warned of potential problems or they want to protect others. The need for compensation to cover economic loss and a desire for revenge can also be factors. But patients rarely sue physicians with whom they have an ongoing relationship of trust and respect or who honestly apologize for mistakes. Similarly, when compensation is appropriate, patients seek more reasonable settlements when they have this type of relationship with their doctor.

Patients rarely sue physicians with whom they have an ongoing relationship of trust and respect or who honestly apologize for mistakes.

Unfortunately, some malpractice insurers still refuse to allow physicians to acknowledge fault. Doctors may also fear settling because settlements must be reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank. While not public, this information is available to hospitals and managed-care plans, who sometimes take action based on those reports. The patient's attorney also sometimes refuses to engage in mediation, fearing the loss of a fee.

Fortunately, several states have adopted laws allowing doctors to apologize without fear of it being used against them later. Statements made in a mediation process also are usually not admissible in court. And insurers are often willing to mediate disputes because the legal fees can be much lower. As Christians seeking to model a different way, we should encourage such moves toward mediation and restoration.

In 1981, the Mennonite Church General Assembly adopted a statement on "The Use of the Law." According to that statement, litigation is not always wrong, but we should only engage in litigation if there are no other alternatives, and we should seek the counsel of the church before we do so. Moreover, we should "encourage the use of mediation, arbitration and other less adversarial ways to dispute resolution" (http://www.mcusa-archives.org/library/resolutions/law_1981.html). That advice remains fresh and vital today. ◻

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Meet AAI team member
Michael D. Wiese, associate

A professor of marketing at Anderson University, Mike has conducted research for many national and international churches and schools. He holds a PhD from Loyola University of Chicago.

Other AAI team members: Jerry Kennell, Rich Gerig, Pat Swartzendruber, Dan Hess and Becky Drumm.

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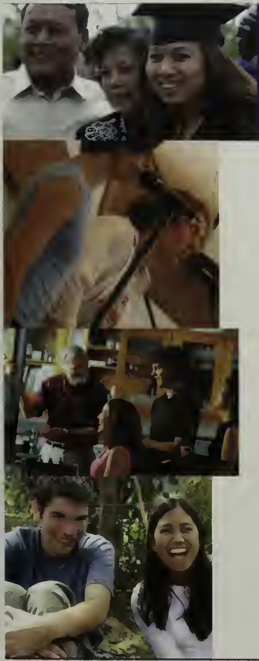

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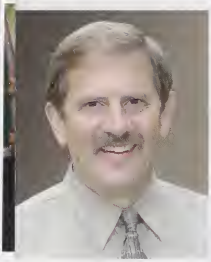

Everett J. Thomas

All dogs go to heaven?

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.—Genesis 1:26b

God gave human beings "dominion" over the animals of the earth at the beginning of creation. Dominion includes more than exploitation or food. It includes a caretaker relationship with the creatures that are passengers with us on this planet. But these creatures can teach us a thing or two about the world in which we live.

One detail that emerged after the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami in the Indian Ocean was that few animals died. Most headed to higher ground before the tidal wave swept ashore. They survived. But I wonder whether any domesticated animals—such as family pets—stayed behind to save their human masters and, consequently, perished with them?

I thought of this while watching *Oprah* on TV late one afternoon. A correspondent for her Angel Network was reporting on the pets left behind as people evacuated from New Orleans. The camera showed a young man sobbing as he buried his face in his dog's neck. The man's uncle explained that the dog had saved both of them from Hurricane Katrina's floodwater. Neither wanted to leave the dog behind—as they were required to do if they wished to be evacuated. Suddenly the reporter broke protocol, moved into the camera frame and embraced both the dog and its weeping owner. The reporter offered to take the dog with him to Baton Rouge, La., for safekeeping until they could be reunited. Being a dog person, I understood the significance of this kindness.

Animals provide more than companionship. They also reveal the dynamics of "dominion," as the writer of Genesis declares. They teach us other important lessons as well. Keith Harder, who works with Mennonite Church USA's ministerial leadership system, describes what he has learned from his horses (page 8). Similarly, I've learned a few things from Meg, our yellow Lab.

First, I've learned that this dominion thing is not necessarily natural. During our eight years together, I've needed to remind Meg every day that I am the alpha dog (the boss). When I walk her, she just can't bring herself to heel—that is, to walk beside and slightly behind me. So we maintain a pretense. She walks slightly ahead, and we both pretend I am leading. I've also learned that—after a burst of tail-wagging joy when I return home each day—much of what she wants from me is self-serving. It's not all affection; she just wants me to scratch her ears or play tug-of-war with her chew toy for hours.

One day she kept interrupting my morning prayers, rudely sticking her nose under my hand to keep petting her. It occurred to me that the way Meg acts with me may be the way I act with God. Much of what happens in our relationship is my agenda, not God's. If I would be God's dog, I am pretty sure I wouldn't heel. Most of the time I'm out in front, doing what I want and deluding myself into thinking we're going where God wants to go. Maybe my praying is just so much begging to have my ears scratched—to monopolize my master's hands. I hope the 1989 movie title is right and all of us alpha dogs do go to heaven.—*ejt*

Animals provide more than companionship. They also reveal what it means to have dominion.

Blessing the animals

On the Catholic calendar, Oct. 4 is the Feast of St. Francis, who is also known as the Patron Saint of Animals. Paintings and statues of St. Francis often show him surrounded by forest animals.

Many Catholic churches hold a Blessing of the Animals event on Oct. 4 in honor of St. Francis. At this event, people—including many non-Catholics—bring their pets for a blessing. One of the best-known such celebrations is held each year at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in upper Manhattan, N.Y., the largest Gothic cathedral in the world.

For the last 20 years, on the first Sunday of October, for several hours, more than 3,500 men, women and children—with dogs, cats, gerbils, turtles and other pets at their sides—worship and praise their loving Creator in the spirit of St. Francis.

Following a celebration of the Eucharist, congregants recite the Prayer of St. Francis. After that, the animals come to the main altar to receive the bishop's blessing.

"Live without fear," the bishop announces. "Your Creator loves you, made you holy and has always protected you. Go in peace to follow the good road, and may God's blessing be with you always. Amen."

The words of the blessing are attributed to St. Clare, a companion of St. Francis.—*Gordon Houser*

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Gifts of silence

Ron W. Adams is pastor at East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa.

Not long ago I went on an eight-day, directed prayer retreat. There were about 30 others in attendance. With the exception of our direction sessions and community worship, the entire eight days were spent in silence.

We ate in silence. We greeted one another with a simple smile. We did not sing in the showers. We walked and ran and read, all without saying a word.

Our silence affected our worship. We entered the space quietly, took our seats and listened to the prelude. When the worship leader welcomed us, everyone welcomed him in return. It felt good to speak. We recited the ancient words of worship slowly, like people whose purpose was to do them justice, not get them over with. We ate and drank together in wonder at such good gifts. When we were free to leave, many remained for a while and reflected on what had just happened among us.

I have often wondered why worship in such settings seems to have more power to move me than does worship in more typical settings. Part of it is the simple majesty of the ancient words, the liturgy still used by Roman Catholics and others. I worry that we Mennonites rely too much on our own creativity to generate worship, when we might do better to reach back to words and gestures that predate our part of the church. Those ancient words have a weight and depth that much of our spontaneous language does not.

We can offer little times of silence within worship.

Part of it, though, is the silence. To enter worship from quiet in order to speak and sing praise to God is the opposite of our usual experience.

Most Sundays, we come to worship from the clamor of work and family, out of breath from rounding up the children and out of patience from the drive. By the time we get to worship, we want some peace and quiet. But first there are all the friends to greet, the newcomers to welcome, the hands to shake and the children to distribute strategically along the pew. When the worship leader calls us to worship, we don't shout for joy. We offer instead a sigh of gratitude that we made it on time and can now sit still for a little while and rest.

No wonder that when we have opportunity for retreat, we come home with a new love for worship and a desire to have the same experience every week. We remember what it feels like to come to worship refreshed and ready to abandon ourselves wholly to the praise of God. And how disappointed we are when whatever new resolution we've made comes a cropper.

We need more silence in our lives. That is obvious to me. What is less apparent is how to create it.

I cannot expect our congregation to join me for eight days away every year. Neither can I expect me or our worship leaders to figure out some way to replicate that experience on Sunday morning.

But we can open up small pockets of quiet that may enrich our worship and nourish our need for peace. We can learn how to be quiet during the musical prelude, using that time to prepare ourselves to address God rather than our neighbors. We can offer little times of silence within worship, moments to reflect on what was just sung or said rather than moving apace every moment. We can open up such spaces in our prayer, inviting folks to listen to God for a moment instead of doing all the talking. And we can provide quiet places in our buildings, places where silence is the rule. Sanctuaries, we might call them, where folks can take time on Sunday morning or anytime to be quiet in God's presence.

Little gifts of silence can enrich our spirits in ways we cannot imagine. They will also enrich our offering of worship, enabling us to sing and speak and pray with our whole beings. Silence really is golden and, like so many other good gifts, is meant to be shared by everyone.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Gulf States disaster

Congratulations on a superb job of reporting on the impact of hurricane Katrina on Mennonites in the Gulf States (Sept. 20). I was pleasantly surprised to find such timely reporting in my mailbox by Sept. 19, less than three weeks after the storm hit. I'm impressed with your speedy work and willingness to flex other plans and focus on this enormous disaster so quickly. Such timely news and reporting of current events that involves Mennonites adds to the excellent quality of an already fine magazine. Cheers and keep up the good work.—*Donald B. Kraybill, Elizabethtown, Pa.*

Proposes a holiday drive

Everett J. Thomas' editorial on Katrina ("Another Perfect Storm") and the centerfold on the Gulf States Conference and congregations was great (Sept. 20). I trust many U.S. Mennonite denominations, conferences and congregations will be on standby to help the leadership and membership in recovery while Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service continue their traditional emergency and disaster services to all.

As a second response, Mennonite Church USA can directly help our own 14 congregations and membership with sisterly and brotherly compassion and perhaps a Thanksgiving/Christmas/New Year's special drive—again above budget—to help.—*C. Nelson Hostetter, Akron, Pa.*

Naming porn

I appreciate the article on pornography ("Naming Porn," Sept. 20). We are long overdue in speaking to this issue. Porn is pervasive, and it is behind a lot of the sexual violence—particularly toward women and children. When more than a tithe of Christians admit to Internet porn addiction, when approximately half of Christians say pornography is a major problem in the home, when 25 percent of the 68 million daily search requests on Internet are for porn, when 12 percent of all Web sites are for pornographic material and when the largest consumer of Internet is the 12- to 16-age group, we get some idea of its seriousness. Add to this porn magazines, literature, movies, TV and soaps, and we see how pervasive it is.

It is still true: "The pure in heart see God." —*John M. Drescher, Quakertown, Pa.*

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue is unique in one unexpected way: It carries the maximum number of advertisements we allow. This is the first time we have bumped into our self-imposed ceiling (25 percent of content). It also provides us with an opportunity to make a point: The messages provided by our advertisers are also important. We hope you read them carefully. If so, you will see, for example, how Mennonite Church USA colleges articulate the importance of an education on their campuses. Several agencies challenge the way we invest, or the way we take care of each other. Other ads alert us to special events, travel opportunities, Web site assistance and best-selling books. But perhaps the most intriguing one in this issue is a brand-new advertisement from Mennonite Church USA (page 31). A new campaign—in the works for at least a year—is designed to help our readers understand who we are with the tag line: Joyfully following Jesus, *We* are Mennonite Church USA.—*Editor*

We are encouraged by and commend Brenda Martin Hurst and the Charlotte 2005 seminar participants for a forward-looking treatise on healing and wholeness in our sexually disordered world ("Naming Porn," Sept. 20). We welcome this pioneer effort to look toward the whole area of our sexuality and see it with the positive biblical focus God intended. It is gratifying to hear, "We can zealously respond to pornography to reclaim our bodies and our human sexuality for their God-intended good purposes" and to be called "to discern what constructive actions to take against this destructive power."

May God bless the beginning efforts that, we trust, will eventually include us all. —*Milo D. and Viola P. Stahl, Harrisonburg, Va.*

I applaud Brenda Martin Hurst for raising a sensitive topic in, "Naming Porn" (Sept. 20). However, I worry that readers may be left with some misconceptions. While a small percentage of women are attracted to pornography (some women survivors of sexual abuse/assault—because of our victimization and against our will—may find ourselves attracted to the sexual violence it depicts), the overwhelming majority of porn users are men, including many Christian men. Thus, good men—our brothers, husbands, sons—may often find themselves attracted to porn, in part due to its availability on the Web. While filters are a great idea, accountability groups for men (not just women, as Hurst suggests) seem crucial. More women may need groups to cope with their shame and sense of failure over the porn use of a family member.

Mennonite Central Committee's Women's Concerns desk in Akron, Pa., has an excellent packet of resources for men and women, including a bibliography for additional reading. The packet is entitled "Pornography: the Secret Sin: Keeping Ourselves Pure."—*Beth Graybill, Lancaster, Pa.*

Masculine spirituality

I found the articles by Alan Kreider and David Boshart on masculine spirituality (Sept. 20) to be affirming to me personally and want to thank you for publishing them. One of the useful roles I have found in retirement is that of "deep-heart listening and sharing" with family and friends and especially to claim the role of "spiritual guide/mentor" to several younger male pastors as well as several fellow church members.—*David Helmuth, Goshen, Ind.*

Revision incorrect

In the Sept. 20 issue you published a Mennonite World Conference news release about the Mennonite-Catholic meeting in Colombia ("Mennonites, Catholics Meet in Colombia"). Your revision of the release produced a first paragraph that is incorrect.

Reading your article, one would think that the Colombians issued the document "Called Together to be Peacemakers." That document was in fact the official report produced by the five-year International Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and Mennonite World Conference, 1998-2003.

MWC requested that member churches study and discuss the document. Colombian Mennonites and Brethren in Christ did that and more, creatively using it for ecumenical dialogue in their own country. So far, however, Catholics and Anabaptists in Colombia have met only once and for only one day, May 20. Plans are underway to meet again, this time with several members of the international dialogue teams present.—*Larry Miller, general secretary, Mennonite World Conference*

Gospel diluted

I was alarmed by "When Is a Rock Concert Just a Rock Concert?" (Speaking Out, Sept. 6). It seems like the gospel is being diluted. In this modern age, these things will make their way into the worship service. I think we are being seduced by our culture. In subordinating Christianity to culture, we destroy Christianity; it becomes a counterfeit. The church must break with the idolatries and misconceptions that dominate our society before it can make an impact on this society.

A "Christian" community has nothing to offer a larger society if it cannot distinguish itself from that society. The world needs congregations that dare to be distinctive. We have far too big a yen to be acculturated with the majority society.

The church has no choice but to become countercultural. It is one thing for a ship to be on the ocean, but it is another thing when the ocean gets into the ship. I would like to have read a little more of the gospel in that article. In our world today, we so often lose sight of the greatest aspect of life: our worship of God.—*Harry Froese, La Junta, Colo.*

Act of kindness

Anne Siegrist's article about Melvin Hertzler ("An Act of Grace," Aug. 20) reminded me of 1933, when my father lost his dairy herd during the Depression due to government testing to eliminate Tuberculosis in cattle. His herd reacted to the testing and had to be destroyed. The government gave him $3 per head, and the farm had to be disinfected and be free of animals for several months. After this, he was struggling to rebuild his dairy.

I'll never forget one summer day when a truck pulled into our farm with a cow on it. It was Melvin Hertzler and his son Daniel bringing one of his best cows, and they gave it to my dad. Melvin said he wanted to help my father rebuild the herd.

I never forgot this act of kindness from one Christian brother helping another brother in our church. Thanks, Anne, for your article.—*Mahlon Kurtz, Elverson, Pa.*

Repeat article for young readers

Re "Bearing Fruit in Old Age" by Martha Kolb-Wyckoff (Aug. 23): It seems to me the advice in this article applies to all ages, and a repeat of the article with a different design to the title—which could touch young readers—would be great. Thanks.—*Arnold Meyers, Waterloo, Ont.*

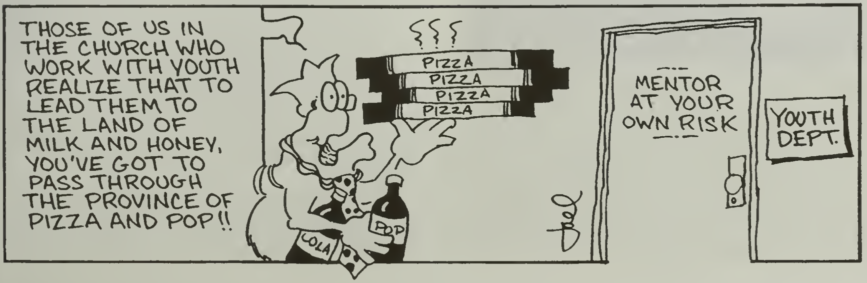
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Young adults in our congregation are:

- ○ Active (76%)
- ○ Not active but welcome (17%)
- ○ Not active and not welcomed (0%)
- ○ There are no young adults (7%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**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MENTOR AT YOUR OWN RISK
YOUTH DEPT.

IN BRIEF

Prieto to deliver Menno Simons lectures at Bethel

Jaime Adrián Prieto Valladares, professor of theology at Latin American Biblical University in San José, Costa Rica, will deliver the 54th annual Menno Simons Lectures Oct. 30-Nov. 1 at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Prieto's theme for his four-lecture series is "Latin American Mennonite History." A native of Costa Rica, Prieto has degrees from Latin American Biblical University and the National University of Costa Rica and a doctorate in theology from the University of Hamburg, Germany. He recently completed a four-year term as president of Latin American Biblical University.—*Bethel College*

Atlanta church hosts seminar on military draft

Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship hosted "Anticipating a Draft: A Seminar for Young Peacemakers and their Parents" on Sept. 10. The event drew 55 youth and adults for a day of discussion and information regarding conscientious objection to war and a potential military draft. AMF is also offering ongoing draft counseling opportunities for those facing registration and a potential draft.—*Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship*

Mission and evangelism degree approved

ELKHART, Ind.—The Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism degree offered by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) has been approved by the seminary's accrediting agency.

AMBS began offering the two-year mission and evangelism degree in 1999 with preliminary approval from the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada. Now, after sufficient experience with and evaluation of the program, AMBS has received approval for the M.A. in Mission and Evangelism as an ongoing degree program.

The program of study is designed for people involved in mission leadership in denominations and for people in larger congregations who have specific assignments to assimilate new members and lead outreach. A review of the program showed that 34 different courses in the area of mission and evangelism have been offered between 1999 and 2005.

"A strong cross-cultural component spans these courses," says Art McPhee, associate professor of mission and intercultural studies. "That is helpful for people from other countries who study here, and it is necessary even in our North American setting because of how diverse our own culture is."

In addition to the two-year MA degree in mission and evangelism, AMBS offers a mission and evangelism track in the three-year Master of Divinity degree program.—*AMBS*

Relief Race

Jim Bishop

EMU students help with hurricane relief

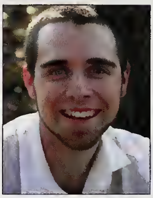
Andrea Kniss (left) and Carissa Sweigart of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., challenge students to collect items for relief kits for hurricane victims. A student-initiated fund-raising effort raised $3,392.63 as of Sept. 28. Also, eight EMU senior nursing students and two professors spent two weeks doing volunteer healthcare work through the American Red Cross among flood victims in Mississippi.—*EMU*

Goshen names Culture for Service awards

GOSHEN, Ind.—Since it was coined in 1904, "Culture for Service" has been the motto of Goshen College and an ideal for students, faculty and staff. On Sept. 30, the college honored three exceptional alumni whose lives and work have exemplified this motto with the Culture for Service Award. Goshen also honored one recent alumnus with its inaugural Decade of Servant Leadership Award, which recognizes young alumni who are making significant contributions to their communities, church and world.

Hans J. Hillerbrand

Carol and Ramzi Farran


Justin Rothshank

The 2005 Culture for Service Award went to 1955 graduate Hans J. Hillerbrand, published scholar and religion professor at Duke University in Durham, N.C., and to 1968 graduate Ramzi Farran and 1969 graduate Carol Farran, a high school chemistry teacher and nurse researcher, respectively, from Oak Park, Ill. Justin Rothshank, a Goshen native and 2000 graduate who now lives and works in Pittsburgh, became the first recipient of the Decade of Servant Leadership Award.—*Goshen College*

CPT workers accompany Palestinians in Iraq

IRAQ—At 7 a.m. on Oct. 4, a busload of 20 Palestinian refugees from Baghdad departed for the Syrian border. The families included seven children ages 1 to 13, five women (one a 77-year-old grandmother) and eight men, two of whom are disabled.

Three members of Christian Peacemaker Teams and one member of Muslim Peacemaker Teams are accompanying the Palestinians on their journey, which has stalled at the Syria-Iraq border.

Why Syria? One of the refugees said, "Syria is the only window open for us right now. Jordan, Kuwait, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran are all closed for us."

The Palestinians came to Iraq following the expulsions from Israel-Palestine in 1948 and 1967. There are 23,000 Palestinians living in Iraq, most of

ddle-a-thon raises funds for Wilderness Wind
ry Ruth Kamp, Millersburg, Ohio, takes part Aug. 10 in lderness Wind's first Paddle-a-Thon. Seven current and for- r staff headed into the Boundary Waters at 4:30 a.m., just as northern lights shimmered across the lake. Their goal was paddle 60 miles in one day. Each participant raised money vard scholarships, new camping equipment and summer ff support. About 90 percent of the $10,000 goal was dged ahead. Besides Kamp, paddlers included Kathy Landis, ecutive director, Newton, Kan., Zeb Holsopple, Goshen, Ind., brey Helmuth, Harrisonburg, Va., James Hiebert, Eugene, e., Nathan Stayrook Hobbs and Peter Jantzen, both from wton. Wilderness Wind is a Mennonite camp near Ely, Minn., it focuses on canoe trips and lakeside camping to nurture ationships with God and creation.—*Beth Landis*

them second generation. They are unable to obtain Iraqi citizenship or passports and have no voting rights. With no freedom to travel or own property, they suffer from overcrowded living conditions and high unemployment. Since the fall of the former regime, the Palestinian community in Baghdad suffers harassment by government officials, false accusations in the media, detention and torture by Iraqi police and army, and lately kidnapping by the criminal element active in the city.

"By our action we want to make the U.N. aware of our situation and to be registered as refugees with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near Middle East) which provides assistance to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Gaza and other Arab nations but not in Iraq," said one of the refugees. "We deserve our human rights and want to be treated justly and live as other humans live, not subjected to constant harassment."—*CPT*

Mennonite/s writing conference needs papers

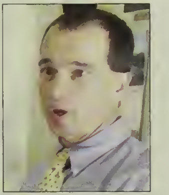
BLUFFTON, Ohio—Proposals for scholarly papers, creative writing presentations and panels are sought for Mennonite/s Writing: Beyond Borders, Oct. 26-29, 2006, on the Bluffton University campus. This is the fourth conference on Mennonite writing in the United States and Canada.

Papers should be suitable for a 15- to 20-minute reading; panel proposals should group three to four individual presentations suitable for a 75-minute session. Proposals (250-300 words) are encouraged on a wide range of topics, including but not limited to innovative approaches to individual authors and texts; comparative and cross-border studies; theorizing the categories "ethnic" and "literature"; ethnic literature beyond identity politics; the intersection of Mennonite literature and the recent "theological turn" in high theory; literary work as theological endeavor; considerations of older Mennonite literature, including *Martyrs Mirror*, considerations of genre Amish and Mennonite fiction; interdisciplinary and cultural studies approaches; considerations of Mennonite writing in conversation with other ethnic literatures; interrogations of national and religious identities as they pertain to North American Mennonite literature; considerations of nonfiction and life writing.

Creative proposals should be accompanied by a brief writing sample (three to four poems or one story/essay) and a selective list of publications. Electronic submissions preferred. Send proposals by Feb. 1, 2006, to Jeff Gundy, gundyj@bluffton.edu, 419-358-3283.—*Bluffton University*

LMHS hosts 60 pastors for Pastors Day

LANCASTER, Pa.—Sixty pastors joined the student body of Lancaster Mennonite High School on Pastors Day, Sept. 27, for its chapel service, which featured Maple Grove Mennonite Church pastor Bill Blank as guest speaker during the school's Commitment Week. They also attended a continental breakfast and heard Bible teachers describe what they teach in their classes. Other staff who shared were director of church relations J. W. Sprunger, campus pastor Dorcas Lehman and LMHS principal Miles Yoder and assistant principal Steven Geyer. Pastors then attended classes and ate lunch with the students.



Bill Blank

The goal of Pastors Day is to strengthen the partnership between church and school as they invite students to personal faith, Christlike witness, peacemaking and service.

Twenty-five of the pastors were from Lancaster Mennonite Conference churches, and five were from Atlantic Coast Conference churches. Other churches represented include Brethren in Christ, Luthuran, Nazarene, Presbyterian and United Methodist.—*LMHS*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Peace award to Colombian leader

Ricardo Esquivia, a Mennonite peacemaker in Colombia, has been given the 2005 Peacemakers in Action Award by the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding in New York. The award, which comes with a $15,000 prize to help fund Esquivia's peacemaking efforts, was presented during a Sept. 25-30 retreat sponsored by the Tanenbaum Center. The retreat brought together religiously motivated leaders doing peace work around the world. Esquivia is a leader in the Colombian Mennonite Church, a former vice president of the Council of Evangelical Churches of Colombia and the founder of Justapaz, a Colombian Mennonite organization that works for peace and justice.—*Mennonite World Conference and Mennonite Central Committee*

Racist captions?

Two similar photos distributed by the Associated Press (Aug. 30) received different captions. One photo shows a black male wading through chest-deep floodwater in New Orleans; the caption says he has just finished "looting a grocery store." A similar photo of a white man and woman has a caption that says they were wading in water after "finding" food at a grocery store.—*The Christian Century*

Tom Gallaher/Goshen College Public Relations

Ryan Miller/Mennonite Mission Network

Loving and

Ryan Miller/Mennonite Mission Network

Jason Harrison/Mennonite Mission Network

With youth ministry gaining more of the spotlight in many churches, young adult ministry seems to be left on the back burner. This pattern doesn't result from a lack of care for young adults but from the difficulties that come with this ministry. Many students regularly attend youth group only to disappear soon after high school graduation. Their attendance is sporadic at best, and their interest in church often seems to have vanished. We are left with the challenge of how to deal with young adults in our churches.

How to minister to young adults

by Katie Moyer

letting go

Despite being in the midst of young adulthood, I confess I have no easy solution to this "problem" many congregations face. Some churches have well-attended and effective young adult programs during Christmas and summer breaks, while others can't even make things happen with all their students home from college. Although there is no fool-proof recipe to keep the young adults happy and coming to church, I offer some suggestions. But before we work at a problem we need to understand why it happens in the first place. While the issue is multifaceted, young adulthood itself is often more to blame for the problem than anything else.

Young adults are making important decisions that will impact the rest of their lives.

Young adults are making important decisions that will impact the rest of their lives. Many leave home for the first time, while the ones who stay struggle to figure out what it means to be independent while living under their parents' roof. This transition between teenage years and adulthood often raises questions. We've spent our whole lives dreaming of what we want to do "when we grow up," and suddenly we find ourselves on the edge of this new phase in life. We want to be loved like when we were young, but we also want freedom. We want to make our own choices, but we don't always know what we want.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

These seemingly paradoxical complexities explain why young adults may seem suddenly uninterested in church. We must acknowledge, though, that the reasons are as different as the people. Some are simply busy with other things. Some have been forced to attend church their whole life and stop going merely because they are finally given the choice. Some don't feel there is any place for them to fit in between the youth group and the adult Sunday school classes. Whatever the reasons, many young adults don't attend church regularly.

We are looking for a greeting that says nothing more than, We missed you while you were gone, and we're glad you're here today.

We could ask how to get young adults to attend church regularly, but our challenge should focus on how to make young adults feel they are still a part of the church body. Our goal should be to help them feel Christ's love so that they will want to be a part of the body of Christ, whether in their home congregation or a new one. The following suggestions focus around this challenge, and while they won't solve everything, they can positively impact young adult ministry.

Give us options, but let the decision up to us. It is important for young adults to know we're valued in the church. This can be shown in a variety of ways. Our young adult programs need to be consistent and flexible. Events should not require everyone's attendance. Sometimes a large number will show up and bring friends; other times only one or two. As post-high school students, we need to know there is something available to us but also that we won't be pressured too much into attending. Many of us have just begun making our own decisions; it is important for us to feel we have freedom to choose for ourselves.

Let us know our presence is valued, but don't make us feel guilty if attendance is sporadic. A lot can be told from the greetings we receive when we come to church. We are looking for a greeting that says nothing more than, We missed you while you were gone, and we're glad you're here today. What we don't want is to be asked, Where have you been? We simply need to feel valued for whatever time we are there.

Treat us like adults, but let us be kids. While adolescence has been labeled the most difficult time in life, young adulthood is just as tough. During our teenage years we are still offered a great deal of structure. While we are given options, we are still not on our own. Suddenly we turn 18 and graduate from high school, and though many of us remain dependent on our parents, we are given the option of independence. We find ourselves in a world that seems distantly removed from youth and adulthood yet at the same time close to both. We want to sit down and have theological discussions, then go play football in the mud. While it may seem difficult, churches need to find the line between treating us as children and treating us like we're already married and settled down.

Let us have ownership. Given the inconsistency I've already explained with young adults and the uniqueness of each group, it is nearly impossible to know what a group of young adults is looking for. Rather than trying to figure out what would be most effective, take time to ask. We may not be interested in committing our time to plan events, but we likely have ideas to offer. If you have a list of options, try running them by a few young

Tom Gallaher/Goshen College Public Relations adults for approval before you pour all your time and energy into planning something we may not be interested in.

Consider partnering with other congregations. Some churches don't have enough young adults to do much programming on their own. Successful ministries often can be formed when congregations work together. Young adults will be less intimidated in a larger group, and many will be excited about meeting new people from other churches.

Invite us to be part of the larger congregation. Invite young adults to read Scripture, lead singing or be part of a church committee. Don't be disappointed if your invitation is turned down. Although we may not admit it, most of us will be honored by the trust and respect you've shown us. Consider creative ways to get us involved. My home congregation, Blooming Glen Mennonite, has made a tradition of inviting the young adults to do the candlelighting during our Christmas Eve service. This has been a meaningful way for college students to feel valued in the congregation when they return home at Christmas. If an invitation to participate isn't accepted, let that be enough for a while.

Continue to love us, but be willing to give us space. Some of us aren't interested in programs, in being a part of worship or even in church. While this may seem extreme, it is often a temporary thing. Continue to connect with us on occasion. Don't underestimate the impact of a simple note or a few kind words that indicate a genuine interest in our lives. Let us know we are being loved and missed, rather than being judged, and it is likely we will come back when we can.

These suggestions won't make everything easy and certainly won't make sense for every group. Young adulthood will continue to be a complex paradox that often doesn't make sense. Adopt only the ideas that fit your young adults. Results may seem small, delayed or nonexistent, but know that your efforts are worthwhile. Many of you have already made a larger impact than you will ever realize. Have patience and take comfort in the knowledge that your love for these post-adolescent children of God will not go unnoticed.

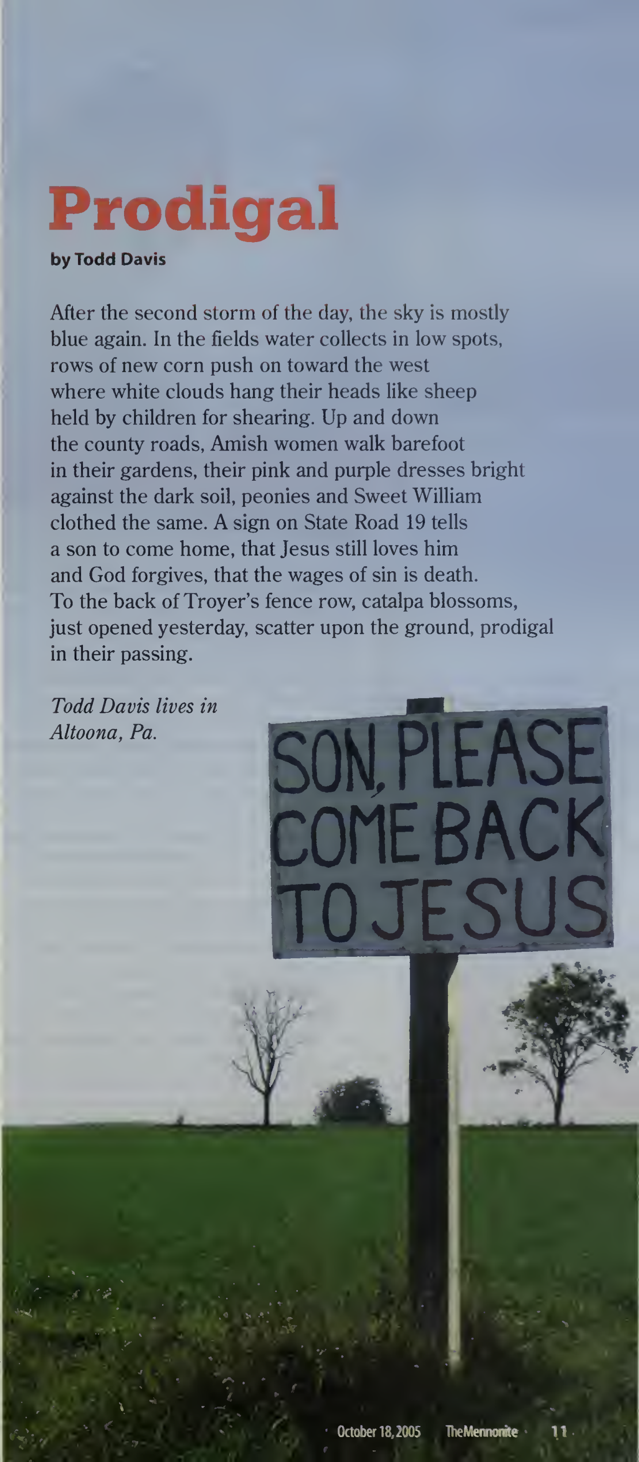
Katie Moyer is a member of Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Prodigal

by Todd Davis

After the second storm of the day, the sky is mostly
blue again. In the fields water collects in low spots,
rows of new corn push on toward the west
where white clouds hang their heads like sheep
held by children for shearing. Up and down
the county roads, Amish women walk barefoot
in their gardens, their pink and purple dresses bright
against the dark soil, peonies and Sweet William
clothed the same. A sign on State Road 19 tells
a son to come home, that Jesus still loves him
and God forgives, that the wages of sin is death.
To the back of Troyer's fence row, catalpa blossoms,
just opened yesterday, scatter upon the ground, prodigal
in their passing.

Todd Davis lives in Altoona, Pa.



Dee Birkey

David Fisher Fast/Mennonite Mission Network

Make the church

by Jeannette S. Buller

I am a church consultant and coach, and nearly every pastor or church planter I talk to, when asked who their ministry is focused toward, says, "Families" and usually, "Young families." In fact, many have the word "family" in their mission statement. I recognize that when people get married and begin a family, they become more interested in finding a church "for their children," if nothing else, which makes them a sensible target group for growing churches.

If we look at who is dropping out and leaving the church, it is often singles. This should at least raise a flag about how we're doing church that makes it seem irrelevant to single adults.

However, as a part of a growing adult single population in the United States, I wonder if the church has lost sight of the need to reach this segment of our communities. *Single Adult Ministries Journal* notes that the largest group of nonchurched people is singles. While church attendance is shrinking—according to pollster George Barna and sociologist Wade Clark Roof—the number of single adults in America is skyrocketing, approaching 50 percent by most accounts. If we look at who is dropping out and leaving the church, it is often singles. This should at least raise a flag about how we're doing church that makes it seem irrelevant to single adults.

Singles are looking for community and significance. This translates into feeling included and using their gifts. After I raised this issue in one church community, a pastor stood up and made an impassioned plea to include singles in the life of the church. This was his idea of using singles in ministry: "They can do photocopying or run other errands for you, like taking you to the airport … but you can't give them positions of responsibility because all they're really interested in is getting married." Having come from a church planted by singles, I took issue with this approach.

One single person I spoke with said he would only go to a church with a singles ministry. Ninety percent of churches are too small to have a thriving singles ministry, but that does not mean they can't minister to and be relevant to singles. I advocate first making an effort to incorporate singles into regular church life before segregating them into a separate ministry.

Rather than go into a long list of what the church is doing that alienates singles (just ask any adult singles who are left in your church; they can tell you), I focus on what any church can do to become more single friendly.

Here are 20 things the church can do and some things we may want to consider.

1. Encourage friendships between genders and assume first that it's just a friendship. If a single brings a friend to church of the opposite gender, treat them as if they are friends. Don't assume that they're dating.

2. If two singles from church sit together, don't assume they are dating; they may just want to have someone to sit with.

3. Well-meaning people often ask, "Why aren't you married?" and make comments about how we "need" to have a spouse, e.g. "You need a man." The former is tantamount to asking us to explain our faults and the latter assumes we're not OK without one. While it is not the intent, that is what we hear.

4. Be encouraging to them about other interests besides dating. Remember and ask them about their interests and endeavors.

5. Singles get tired of coming to church functions alone, so sometimes they just stay home. Consider calling to pick them up or at least call to see if they're coming and tell them you'll meet them there. Ask them if they have someone to sit with

Does your church have a 'marrieds only' sign on the door?

and invite them to sit with you or join you at the service or activity.

6. Recognize that most singles will not attend for long a gathering where they are the only single or where talk of marriage and kids dominates the conversation. Make an effort to shape the discussion to include them. If they quit, don't take it personally and understand that it's OK for them to quit; don't make them feel guilty about it. Try to include them in other ways.

single friendly

7. Make the effort to cultivate friendships with singles. Married people always seem so busy that singles hesitate to bother them. Singles are usually the ones doing the driving to the married people's house. Occasionally reciprocate by offering to meet at their place or at least meet them somewhere between.

8. Many singles love kids. Allow them to be an "aunt" or "uncle" to your children. This will mean inviting them into your family in a significant way.

9. Especially in small groups, Sunday school and other social functions where singles and married people mix, singles get weary of always relating to "the couple." Consider sitting separately sometimes, be aware of how physically present you are to your spouse and how that can isolate singles. Also make an effort to join separate conversations from your spouse.

10. Singles are touch deprived. Touch them, hug them, shake their hands or whatever is appropriate in your setting.

11. If there is interest, form a Sunday school class or small group for adult singles. Sometimes meeting at a coffee shop can give it a more intimate feel—just make sure there are at least two leaders present, or it could turn into a blind date.

12. Take the time to discover their gifts and passions and challenge them to use their gifts in significant service to the kingdom—even if it's not in the local church or in a singles ministry. If possible, team them up with someone else to lead or serve. This could include teaching a Sunday school class, leading a commission or ministry team, or planning a social activity for the church.

13. For single women, especially if they own a house, ask them what they need some help with. Some common needs include home improvements, car repairs, a ride to the airport—anything that takes two people or extra muscle.

14. Recognize that single women are not trying to steal the married men. They are not dangerous.

15. If a single person shares his or her pain of being single, don't tell them they should be happy because they're missing all the pain of married life. Listen with compassion, pray with and for them.

16. Don't play matchmaker without asking. If you think you know someone they might be interested in, ask the single if he or she would like to meet this other person.

17. Don't assume that just because two people are approximately the same age and single that they will be good friends. Single adults are more than just single. They still have personalities, hobbies, interests and approaches to life that may or may not make for a good-friend scenario between two individuals.

18. Have a Sunday for the whole church to celebrate singles (similar to Mother's Day and Father's Day). Highlight how much the singles in the church have contributed to the church life and ways they are serving the Lord (perhaps beyond the local church). Acknowledge the hardships they face and encourage them in their walk.

19. Make an effort to have singles involved in up-front ministries (preaching, leading worship, on the worship team) on a regular basis, not just on Singles Sunday. Being intentional in this way sends a loud message that singles make a significant contribution to the ministry of that church.

20. Review your ministries, special events, announcements and sermon illustrations. Ask yourself how many are focused on families and if they are presented in a way that includes or alienates singles.

The church has much to offer single adults. We have the potential to offer a safe place to find healthy, loving relationships and a place for all people, both married and single, to blossom in their gifts and pursue their God-given call. But for this to happen, the church needs to recognize the incredible gift singles are to the church and actively cultivate an atmosphere that values who they are and what they bring to the church.

Jeannette S. Buller is a single, ordained minister with Mennonite Church USA. She attends Trinity Mennonite Church in Phoenix, Ariz.

We have the potential to offer a safe place to find healthy, loving relationships and a place for all people, both married and single, to blossom in their gifts and pursue their God-given call.

Use parental

by Patricia J. Davis

If we fail to teach Christian values, the media-driven culture and entertainment industry will supply our sons and daughters with its values.

Joe was close to tears while pacing the kitchen floor. "It's rated PG, Mom. All my friends are going. Justin's mom is taking us to the mall. I'll look like a fool if I say you won't let me see it," he said in a loud voice.

It was the end of a long school week with many tests for my 14-year-old son. I felt he deserved a break, too. I agreed he could go out with his friends. But it didn't include going to a film that neither my husband nor I approved of him seeing.

"Why are you spoiling my fun?" Joe went to his room and slammed the door.

In an endeavor to keep our boys' minds and hearts pure for as long as possible, we soon realized that neither the ratings provided for films by the media nor the evaluations of other parents could be our family's guide. Even with an MPAA rating of PG-13 or even PG, a film could gravitate quicker than I could bat an eyelid into verbal exchanges filled with unexpected profanity, accompanying violence and sexual references or scenes that included nudity. I tired of having to fast forward through these offensive scenes.

Often I stopped the film and turned off the set.

The Internet, explicit sex and violence in film and television, popular music and certain teen magazines are powerful forces that can corrupt our children. They are exploitative and present images or messages with unrealistic expectations. Often sexual encounters are seen as casual and portrayed without relationship and consequences. What can a parent do?

1. Exercise parental responsibility. The apostle Paul exhorts Christians to "bring up [their children] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Parents are the best interpreters of program content. But too many parents are unclear about what their child should be viewing. What can parents do? We can begin by assuming responsibility, being aware and taking a stand. Parents are urged to "train children in the right way" (Proverbs 22:6).

2. Supervise entertainment. Do we allow our children to watch anything they choose? Many children have a TV set in their bedroom. A majority of kids say their parents have no rules about films and TV viewing, according to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2001. We need to set limits and screen TV viewing. Ask your child what video is being shown at the sleepover. Often it is reassuring when another parent shows diligence in setting a high standard for viewing. But don't be surprised if you must stand alone at times.

3. Participate in viewing. Another study by the same foundation revealed that two-thirds of school-age children have a television. Few parents watch it with them. By viewing with your child, you have an opportunity to discuss what is seen and draw some lessons from the experiences of those in the program, all the while helping them form an opinion based on biblical and moral standards. In a letter addressed to Titus, his true son, Paul instructs us all to "live lives that are self-controlled, upright and godly" (Titus 2:12b).

4. Teach Christian values. How is it possible for us to nurture the spiritual and moral development of our children if they watch television as much as five hours a day? If we fail to teach Christian values, the media-driven culture and entertainment industry will supply our sons and daughters with its values. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says: "Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise." Paul reminds Timothy that "from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15).

5. Become the primary instructor. There has been a pervasive change in TV programming in the past 20 years. Parents should not use the media to inform their kids about sex because of their own anxiety over talking with them about the subject.

A study in 2004 conducted by the Rand Corporation, funded by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, reveals the dramatic impact on adolescents of portrayal of sexual content in the media. It demonstrates that kids are more sexually active in proportion to viewing these programs.

The Rand Corporation concluded that "this study clearly indicates the need for ameliorating the effects of TV sexual content on youth behavior but provides only limited insight into the best method for its accomplishment." This data was presented in an article in the journal *Pediatrics* (September 2004) titled, "Watching Sex on TV Predicts Adolescent Initiation of Sexual Behavior."

We need to help our children put on the whole armor of God so they, too, can take a stand against the devil's schemes (Ephesians 6:11-17).

guidance

Nine ways to guide children's use of popular media

It is imperative that we teach our sons and daughters the biblical view of sex and that God's instructions are there for their protection. Let them know they can always come with their questions. God created sex for union between husband and wife (Genesis 2:24). Paul tells the Ephesians "fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you" (Ephesians 5:3).

6. Become informed about ratings . Parents can obtain information on a particular video or movie by visiting www.screenit.com. This site provides an entertainment review, comments about the film, a summary of plot content and the reason it is rated a particular way (see box).

The criteria for judging a film has changed for the worse. A film rated PG-13 five years ago could carry a PG rating today. Either rating may include an adult situation, foul language, violence and nudity. And a study by Applied Research, Inc. shows that kids at younger ages are moving on to shows created with older kids in mind. Many TV-14 ratings for a program are questionable for this age group.

7. Check out other resources . Videos and DVDs from various distributors (Family Favorites, Hallmark, Disney) may be borrowed from the public library. If in doubt about any movie borrowed from the adult section, view it beforehand. If not appropriate, return it without any cost. Often, first reading the book from which a film is made enhances the viewing experience, so don't forget to take out books while there.

Parents can share information by letting others in their sphere know when they see a film they can recommend with a clear conscience. They can also express disappointment in a particular movie as well.

8. Be aware of negative effects of excessive viewing. Many children sit in front of the television because they are bored. The latest statistics say school-age children watch television more than five hours a day. We need to replace it with productive activities—reading for pleasure, board games, projects—that can recapture the imagination while improving family time. If families limit their viewing time, it will be even more special when they do sit to watch.

The rates of obesity in children have increased dramatically over the last 20 years. This is due in part to snacking and sitting in front of the television or playing video/computer games. Time spent in front of a screen is time taken away from body-building, calorie-burning, physical activities.

Current research supports the belief that cartoons and animated features with high violence content can lead to bullying. Also, a 22-year study reveals there has been an increase in suicides and homicides among youth directly related to violence viewed on television and in films.

9. Set a godly example. We teach our children not by talking about godly values but by translating them into our life. We should not send a double message by passively accepting and continuing to watch ungodly programming. If our kids see inconsistency in us, we send the message that it's all right for an adult but not for them to view trash. We can destroy our efforts to reach them. The Psalmist desires "to walk with integrity of heart within my house; I will not set before my eyes anything that is base" (Psalm 101:2,3).

Parents should be in authority and provide guidance. Children feel safe when a loving parent takes charge. We will never regret our decision to monitor carefully both TV and video viewing. And the benefit to our children will be everlasting.

My son did not go to the cinema that Friday night. Instead he called another friend, and they went skateboarding. When I picked Joe up, he had had so much fun that the movie was forgotten. He even apologized for arguing with me and for the unpleasantness earlier that evening.

Patricia J. Davis lives in Philadelphia.

We teach our children not by talking about godly values but by translating them into our life.

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Resources

Ted Baehr's Movieguide, www.movieguide.org

This movie guide is a ministry dedicated to redeeming the values of the mass media according to biblical principles and helping families make wise media choices. Your family will treasure hours of undeniably entertaining and positive movie fun with these uplifting films suitable for everyone.

Feature Films for Families distributes many classic films and also creates its own films. Visit www.familytv.com (and to view a trailer) or call 800-326-4598 to purchase.—*Patricia J. Davis*

Peg Jacobs

Susan Classen sits in the front entrance of the new environmentally sustainable cabin she is building on the grounds of Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse in Nerinx, Ky.

From sawdust into cabin

by Laurie L. Oswald

Whether building a cabin, relationships or a foundation for life, people can choose to join God in redeeming what is damaged.
—Susan Classen

People don't often look at felled wood and sawdust and see a cabin in the making. Susan Classen didn't either until she built a new foundation for life.

Susan, a worker for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Latin America for 20 years (1981 through 2003), saw much economic deprivation, civil war and human suffering. This left her painfully aware of how many people don't have the freedom to develop their giftedness. In response, she wanted to help transform the lives of forgotten and marginalized people in our world and to embrace a lifestyle that cares for and sustains God's creation.

In an effort to live out these values within her own North American culture, she moved back to the United States in 2003. She is now director of Cedars of Peace, part of the Sisters of Loretto, a Catholic community in rural Kentucky. She welcomes retreat-goers for varying periods of solitude in a cluster of seven hermitages on the grounds of the Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse. She also provides spiritual direction and is building an environmentally sustainable cabin.

The building project embodies what it means to help transform the world into a place where people and natural resources are recognized, redeemed and reincorporated into an affirming community full of God's presence and purpose, she says. The project is one expression of how the Sisters of Loretto value caring for the earth. The cabin is made of downed trees, old furniture, parts of abandoned buildings and local materials, such as cedar.

"I lived so many years with people who were discarded by society and whose gifts were not recognized or appreciated," she says. "That inspired my commitment to be part of a transformation process." In our society, she says, we waste goods and people. "We live in a depleted world because people don't have the opportunity to develop their gifts or because we don't use the materials around us that are going to waste.

"There is a direct link between this tangible building project and the transformation of our world. Whether we're talking painful experiences in our lives or a piece of discarded wood—I want to see potential in everything and everyone and call forth that potential."

Transforming buildings, relationships: Susan calls forth that potential in people by providing spiritual direction, including Christian Peacemaker Teams workers. She also has the opportunity to be part of building ecumenical relationships. She is an associate member of the Catholic community and a member of Paoli (Ind.) Mennonite Church Fellowship, 2fi hours from Cedars. The congregation belongs to Central District Conference, one of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences.

Whether building a cabin, relationships or a foundation for life, people can choose to join God in redeeming what is damaged, she says. For example, the posts of the new cabin are downed trees from the nearby woods. The beams are from an old barn located near the Paoli congregation. Because two of the biggest landfill issues are old carpeting and old shingle roofs, Susan chose recyclable metal for the roof.

Old tongue-and-grooved yellow pine canning shelves from a cellar in the motherhouse are now

How one Mennonite woman seeks transformation

the ceiling in the cabin's main living area. The barn beams form the main beam down the center of the house. Old prayer kneelers from a Sisters of Loretto community in St. Louis have become wainscoting paneling. The cabin is a timber frame structure that has a passive solar design with large south windows to absorb winter sun. The walls are formed from 18-inch lengths of cedar mortared together with clay and insulated with sawdust.

God's abundant acceptance transforms people to abandon self for good of others. Susan wrote two books about how her own transformation readied her for this season of building in new ways. During transitions between MCC service assignments in *Vultures and Butterflies* (1991) and *Dewdrops on Spiderwebs* (1994). She shared how she couldn't embrace a new perspective until the old one had worn itself out.

“I kept pushing myself, and one eventually gets to the end of that,” she says. “I had grown up saying that God is love, but I hadn't begun to receive God's unconditional acceptance of me. I've heard it said that ‘God is love, but do we know ourselves as loved by God?’

“Life doesn't multiply when I give out of guilt, out of my own need to make a difference, out of a martyr complex. I want to give myself so life multiplies abundantly in and through me. But life multiplies in abundance only when we abandon ourselves for the good of the whole. And abandoning ourselves for the sake of others requires the willingness to suffer.”

At one of the darkest times in the war in Central America, she glimpsed the abyss of evil, Susan says. “I thought I had seen as deep as was possible to see, and I didn't think I would come up out of it,” she says. “But I came to see that while evil is deep, love and goodness are deeper still.”

During a time at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., she researched and wrote papers on grace and uncovered some writings of Pilgrim Marpeck, an early Anabaptist. He said much about the concept of original grace, she says, “that grace runs deeper than original sin. Everything and everyone has the potential to turn toward God.”

Transformation takes time, helps one dream God's dreams. Because Susan wants to flow with the reality that transformation takes time, she isn't racing a deadline for cabin completion. But after laboring on it for months with the help of her community, friends and contractors, the cabin is ready for inside finishing work. Susan will live in the cabin, but it will belong to the community. She's had unexpected complexities in the building process, but she endeavors to remain centered and in harmony with God and creation. Directing a retreat center and building a cabin in rural Kentucky is Susan's way of joining God's work in the world.

“We tend not to think that retreat is a part of reaching out to the world,” she says. “But whether one is redeeming parts of one's soul, redeeming the material resources around them or redeeming people's lives, we need to be sensitive to the moving of the Spirit. And then the Spirit can draw us toward the hopes and dreams of God.

“Retreat can be part of the visioning and dreaming process. Just because we can't readily see this process doesn't mean it isn't part of God's activity or our cooperation with that activity.”

Giving life away so that life multiplies requires abiding trust.—Susan Classen

It was during Susan's time in Central America where her thinking shifted from believing she was responsible for building God's kingdom to simply joining what God was already doing in the world.

“I no longer think of myself as building the reign of God,” she says. “I think of myself as a participant in that process that has been unfolding since the beginning of time and will continue to unfold throughout the ages.

“I frequently remind myself that I am essential to the process but not indispensable and that I am responsible only for the piece that has been given me—nothing more, nothing less. Energy is freed when we let go of burdens that are not ours to bear.

“Giving life away so that life multiplies requires abiding trust. In order to believe that my piece is enough, I must trust that I am part of God's dreams for the world and that seeds of dreams are being planted all around.”

Laurie L. Oswald is news service director for Mennonite Church USA.

Clear, courageous and creative leadership

Keith Harder is director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

In the aftermath of the hurricanes that ravaged the Gulf Coast, mayors, governors, agency heads and President Bush have been charged with not exercising the kind of leadership that might have reduced the loss and suffering.

What can we learn about leadership from this experience? What might this say about leadership in the church?

First, leadership is most needed and most difficult in times of high anxiety, threat and stress. When lives and well-being are threatened, most people have a heightened desire to know that someone is in charge, that someone will protect them and make things better.

Second, in hard times people want to see and interact with those in leadership positions. They want to know that their leaders "feel their pain" and communicate confidence that we will make it through these hard times. Perhaps to correct the perception that his initial response was weak and tardy, President Bush made seven trips to the Gulf Coast region over a three-week period.

Third, those in leadership positions usually face the wrath of constituents when they do not meet their expectations. Sometimes it works for leaders to accept responsibility for their failures, but often they will be voted out of office whether they were actually responsible for what went bad or not. Politicians and pastors alike have experienced the fury of those they have disappointed.

The expectations we have of our leaders puts them in a precarious position. Leaders in highly anxious times may try inappropriately to take control and promise what is beyond their ability to deliver. Initially, many people may applaud strong, controlling leadership, but it seldom ends well. If a leader reacts out of his or her anxiety and insists on shortcuts or simplistic answers ("you are for us or against us"), she or he risks increasing everyone's anxiety and making things worse. The problem is that when we feel threatened and fearful, we may not have the patience for our leaders to give a more thoughtful response.

Another danger is that leaders will exhibit what Ed Friedman calls a "failure of nerve." They may try to lead by pandering to what they think their constituencies want, or they may abdicate responsibility altogether. The inability to take a stand or trying to lead by opinion polls tends to feed polarization and anxiety.

It appears there was a lot of turmoil and anxiety in the time of Jesus. Disputes over how to respond to Roman oppression and over what it meant to be faithful to the law fed this anxiety and begged for leadership. As his notoriety grew, Jesus became the target of those who wanted to know whether he was on their side or could be co-opted to lead their faction.

On one occasion, when a woman accused of adultery was brought to him, he refused to be co-opted for anyone's purpose. In a situation I imagine was full of tension, he waited until those who had brought the accusation faded away and he was left alone with the accused. In his silent presence he refused to be polarized or give her accusers what they wanted.

On other occasions he confounded his followers and critics alike with parables and cryptic sayings designed to help them rethink assumed certainties and prejudices. When they wanted clear-cut answers, he painted a picture that created new possibilities. On still other occasions he denounced the religious authorities and overturned the tables of money changers.

The common theme in all these situations is that Jesus refused to be defined by the demands, needs or expectations of others. As Jesus practiced servant leadership, he neither acquiesced to the needs and expectations of others nor shrank from taking costly stands. Sometimes he led with his silent presence, sometimes with wit and wisdom, sometimes by standing up to his adversaries.

We also live in anxious times. The pace of change, challenges to assumed certainties, external threats all contribute to making leadership all the more needed and also more difficult. Leadership that is clear, courageous, creative and even playful is needed more than ever in these days in the church and in the world.

I saw this headline describing the grass-roots protest of the war in Iraq: "When followers lead, leaders will follow." This recognizes that those in leadership positions do not have a corner on leadership. It is also an indictment of leaders who exhibit a failure of nerve and a failure of imagination.

May God give us leaders who are can lead with clarity, courage and imagination after the spirit and example of Jesus. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Mennonite evangelism**—Amy Showalter
- **Ticket to heaven?**—Marlin Birkey
- **Four essentials of church growth**—John Drescher

No haven for immigrants after Katrina

Undocumented Honduran imprisoned after becoming a hurricane evacuee.

Julio Galvez, a 33-year-old immigrant from Honduras, evacuated his home in Metairie, La., before Hurricane Katrina struck. Galvez is a member of Iglesia Amor Viviente—a Metairie congregation that is part of Gulf States Mennonite Conference—and he traveled to Houston with friends and family from the church.

Galvez received a debit card at a nearby Red Cross service center that was providing financial help to hurricane evacuees or others with homes damaged by the storm. Galvez is an undocumented immigrant, and he used an international driver's license from Honduras as his photo identification.

After trying unsuccessfully to activate his debit card, Galvez returned to the Red Cross, where they replaced the faulty card with a check. As he was leaving the center, however, a plain-clothes policeman stopped him. The officer looked at Galvez' ID and drove him to a police station, where he was questioned, photographed and fingerprinted.

Detained overnight, Galvez says, "I realized in jail that I was not the only person who was suffering. There were others, too, who did not know why they were there."

Along with Galvez, a handful of undocumented evacuees across the country were detained, with at least three processed for deportation, despite early assurances—distributed in English and Spanish—by the Bush administration that all storm victims should seek help regardless of their immigration status.

The president, says Galvez, "was telling us that nothing would happen. We were trusting in him—and in God—when we went to get help. Now we realize you cannot have faith in the government."

Media reports of the detentions have left many immigrant evacuees, even legal immigrants, too frightened to seek hurricane aid. Some with green cards lost their documents in the disaster. Others with temporary visas lost their authorization when sponsors died or workplaces flooded.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, more than 30,000 immigrants with temporary visas and almost 25,000 with green cards were affected by the hurricane, along with an unknown number of undocumented evacuees—mostly Mexicans, Hondurans and Vietnamese.

Immigrant advocates are calling on the Department of Homeland Security to direct its enforcement officers to refrain from detaining Katrina survivors. In addition, many are seeking temporary protected status for undocumented evacuees, similar to opportunities extended by the United States to Central American refugees after natural disasters and after Sept. 11, 2001.

Galvez was released on bond just before Hurricane Rita forced him to evacuate again with other members of Amor Viviente, this time to San Antonio to be hosted by San Antonio Mennonite Church. He then returned to Metairie, where he managed a landscaping business and an apartment complex before the disaster. But Galvez' troubles are not over; he has been ordered to return to Houston on Oct. 7 for an arraignment. The details of his legal situation are not clear, and Galvez says, "The only way to move ahead is just to depend on God."—*Bethany Spicher Schonberg of Mennonite Central Committee*

I realized in jail that I was not the only person who was suffering.
—Julio Galvez

Klassen coordinates hurricane effort

Mennonite Disaster Service recently named Gerald Klassen as Gulf Coast coordinator for the MDS volunteer response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The decision to hire a full-time coordinator is directly related to the magnitude of disaster. Thousands of evacuees do not have a place to call home.

"The task is huge," says MDS executive coordinator Kevin King. "We need to focus our resources on getting people out of shelters and back into their homes."

MDS expects to open an unprecedented number of project locations in the Gulf Coast region. Some of the volunteers directing these reconstruction projects will be new to MDS.

The Gulf Coast coordinator will be positioned in the region to provide these projects with additional support from the binational office that oversees MDS operations.

"Having someone nearby to walk with our directors may well encourage others, new to MDS, to step up to the plate and give leadership to a project," says Klassen.

Gerald Klassen

Klassen brings experience to that role. In addition to his own service as a volunteer, he has trained incoming project directors. In the past 14 years alone, Klassen and Doreen, his wife, volunteered 42 months with MDS. The couple became hooked on MDS after spending a month framing and shingling homes in Watsonville, Calif.

"It is so much more than building houses," says Klassen. "It is building hope in people's lives."

As project directors the Klassens have served up to seven months at a time, working directly with clients and providing volunteers with opportunities to serve.

"Jerry and Doreen have huge hearts of compassion," says King. "They love to see the church reaching out to be a healing balm in the midst of disaster."

In the off months between projects the Klassens returned home to run their construction company in Burns Lake, B.C.

Prior to involvement with MDS, the Klassens pastored two congregations in Canada, raised a family and opened a restaurant. In his spare time, Jerry volunteered as an auxiliary officer for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The success of the restaurant ultimately allowed Jerry and Doreen "to give back to God. We were looking for an opportunity for service and MDS has given us just that," says Klassen.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

Collaboration won't sacrifice differences

Mennonite Mission Network and Eastern Mennonite Missions sign protocols.

Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM) and Mennonite Mission Network have joined hands. Both boards recently agreed on protocols that will help the two agencies continue to collaborate while retaining their individuality.

Richard Showalter, EMM president, says the two agencies have enjoyed working together for many years. The new protocols are both a continuation of a past relationship and a renewed commitment to each other, one that will be reviewed annually. Stanley Green, Mission Network executive director and CEO, says the agreement acknowledges both the mutual respect and cooperation between the agencies as well as their individuality in approach to mission.

"Knowing that we share a common foundation but have significant differences in policy, strategy and priorities, we are committed to a stance that honors and respects these choices even when our choices would be different," the agreement says.

Many groups of congregations and individuals—who support specific mission workers financially and through prayer—overlap the core constituencies of both agencies. Among the protocols are agreements about how these teams will operate.

Currently, the two agencies jointly support nine mission workers on three continents. In addition to international mission efforts, both have discipleship training ministries, mission education and other U.S. ministries.

EMM is supported primarily by congregations in Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference as well as other churches, conferences and agencies. EMM supports nearly 300 workers in 37 countries.

Mennonite Mission Network is the official mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. Mennonite Mission Network's global ministries department supports more than 170 mission workers in more than 50 countries—*Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

We share a common foundation but have significant differences in policy, strategy and priorities.
—Stanley Green

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CLC agrees to look at conference roles

Constituency Leaders Council changes agenda, hears from Gulf States pastors.

We are starting with a new spirit —Sharon Waltner

Democracy lives. At the Constituency Leaders Council, held Oct. 7-9 at Lake Doniphan Retreat Center near Excelsior Springs, Mo., Sharon Waltner, chair of CLC as moderator-elect of Menonite Church USA, repeatedly changed the agenda of the meeting to accommodate members' wishes. Foremost among those wishes was creating a task group that will clarify the roles of area conferences, the Executive Board and its agencies.

"We are starting with a new spirit," Waltner said in an opening address, "with a high value on discerning how we can be supportive of and encouraging to each other. We act from the belief that we want someone else to hear our joys and sorrows, who will value us as persons, who will help create an environment of trust and mutuality."

In response to a paper by Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, CLC members indicated they wanted to address more fully the role of area conferences.

A working group formed to bring a proposal for how to handle this concern. CLC members discussed this in table groups and agreed on forming a task group that will bring a proposal to the CLC meeting next March. Such a proposal, they agreed, will acknowledge that congregations are where kingdom activity primarily happens, honor each conference's uniqueness and history, value churchwide priorities of being missional and developing leadership and be in harmony with the teachings of Jesus and with Anabaptist understandings.

The task group proposal recommended that conferences contribute toward the costs of a meeting according to their size. For the first time, the table groups were organized according to conference size (in addition to constituency groups and agencies). Representatives from small-, medium- and large-sized conferences sat with others from similar-sized conferences. As table groups responded to the proposal, Dale Ivy of Southeast Mennonite Conference spoke for a table of representatives from small conferences. He said they don't have the money, "but we'll find it; it's that important."

CLC members also heard from two leaders from Gulf States Mennonite Conference about their experiences in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Bob Zehr, interim pastor of Open Door Mennonite Church, Jackson, Miss., but living in Des Allemands, La., spoke of seeing debris piled 30 feet high and pine trees snapped off 15 to 20 feet high. The hospital he used was one of eight hospitals that are now closed. Only four remain open. "We've had five weeks of standing in line for everything," he said. "Military police are everywhere."

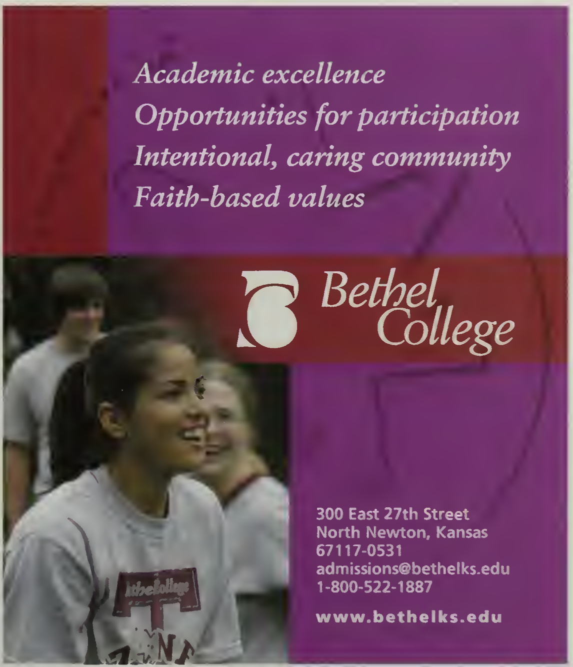
He reported on a meeting at Pine Lake Fellowship Camp with members of Lighthouse Fellowship Church, who have not returned to their meetinghouse since that area is devastated. Some of the members lost their shrimp boats, their livelihood, in the storm. And their property insurance ended when Mennonite Property Aid joined other mutual aid organizations to form Mutual Aid eXchange (MAX) in 2003. (See "Gulf States Members Lose Insurance," Oct. 19, 2004.)

Duane Maust, Gulf States moderator, spoke of hosting evacuees in his church in Meridian, Miss. He traveled with Kevin King of Mennonite Disaster Service to Gulfport and saw semi trailers used as morgues.

José Elizalde, pastor of Houston Mennonite Church, added his experiences of hosting "the poorest of the poor" and becoming an evacuee when Hurricane Rita hit.

CLC members took up a collection to aid people in the Gulf States.

CLC members also discussed Charlotte 2005 and the frequency of churchwide assemblies, heard from Allegheny Conference about its experience with membership guidelines, discussed the CEO's resignation at MMA and asked if young adults should form a constituency group.—*Gordon Houser*



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Mountain States Conference organized

Official beginning date Jan. 1, 2006; new group will replace 'tired structure.'

Medical ministry brought Mennonites to the mountain states region in the 1950s and 60s. But as that era fades, Mennonites are seeking new ways to reach out to their communities, including the formation of Mountain States Mennonite Conference, the newest of Mennonite Church USA's 21 area conferences.

The first gathering of the conference drew more than 200 participants Sept. 9 -11 in Glenwood Springs, Colo., to envision new ministry opportunities. Through worship, fellowship and business, the 22 congregations that will form Mountain States celebrated both a rich heritage and a new day. The gathering theme was "Celebrating God's Dreams: New Passion, New Trust, New Mission."

"Mennonites initially came here to work in medical ministries, including 1-W volunteers who worked in hospitals and the Mennonites who began hospitals," says Vern Rempel, a member of the committee that helped shape the new conference and pastor of First Mennonite Church in Denver. "But the energy that drove all that has been fading for years. The old structure of Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference helped to support all those good things, but I think it was becoming a tired structure that needed some rejuvenation for the new things that God wants to do here."

Mountain States will officially begin Jan. 1, 2006, and will include 16 congregations that belong to Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference, two congregations that belong to Western District Conference and four congregations dually affiliated with both. The new conference will replace Rocky Mountain Mennonite Conference.

A new Leadership Board will help cast vision for the new area conference, but staff and congregations will give shape for how that vision is realized.

"This is a new day, and we are looking for a new approach," says Rheinheimer, co-pastor of Mountain Community Mennonite Church in Palmer Lake, Colo. "In this new era, it will be difficult for any area conference to focus on just one kind of ministry, given all the changes in our society. Rather, church will be about many people having different callings and connecting with others who have the same calling. The role of conference will no longer be about doing the ministry but about facilitating those connections."—*Laurie L. Oswald of Mennonite Church USA News Service. Vern Rempel contributed to this report.*

> This is a new day, and we are looking for a new approach.
> —Don Reheinheimer

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MWC and AMC look at relationship

The relationship of Asia Mennonite Conference to Mennonite World Conference (MWC) was the major issue during the Sept. 25 meeting of the AMC executive committee in Taipei, Taiwan.

"The AMC and MWC are moving closer together," said AMC chair Yoshihira Inamine, "so we need to discern what a formal relationship looks like."

They debated two possible options: associate membership or an integrated partnership that allows for some autonomy by AMC to conduct Asia-related programs. The consensus of AMC executive committee members was to move toward the latter option over the next few years. The discussion will continue in the MWC officers' meeting in November and at MWC General Council meetings in Pasadena, Calif., in March 2006.

The group also agreed to conduct a discipleship ministry training camp in July 2006 for Mennonite youth in the East Asia region. South Korea was selected as a possible location for the camp.

The AMC general council, with representatives from each member conference, is planned for Tokyo in October 2007 and a youth work camp for Southeast Asia in 2008.—*Sheldon Sawatzky of Mennonite World Conference*

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CALENDAR

Aurora (Ohio) Mennonite Church, *Centennial Celebration*, Homecoming Weekend, Nov. 5-6. For more information, call 330-562-8011 or visit www.auroramennonite.org.

Franconia Mennonite Conference, *Antiracism Analysis Training*, Feb. 24-26, Philadelphia, Pa. This 2fi-day antiracism analysis/training introduces participants to the language and basic understandings of systemic racism in society and in the church. For a brochure, contact Sharon Williams at 610-277-1729 or sharonw@designforministry.com.

WORKERS

Beck, Duane, will be installed Nov. 6 as lead pastor at Raleigh (N.C.) Mennonite Church.

Musser, Eric, was installed Oct. 6 as pastor at Huntington Mennonite Church, Newport News, Va.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Barrosa, Netza Antonio, Sept. 10, to Netza and Glenis De la Rosa Barrosa, Norristown, Pa.

Cardona, Maxwell Samuel, Sept. 28, to Rick and Janeen Frankenfield Cardona, Harleysville, Pa.

Chandler, Morgan Nicole, Aug. 17, to Gary and Marcie Swartzendruber Chandler, Bad Axe, Mich.

Cisco, Xavier Olen Kandel, Aug. 1, to Kumar Cisco and Brooke E. Kandel, Houston, Texas.

Coy Dick, Diego Xavier, Sept. 12, to Juan Coy and Daagya Dick, Moundridge, Kan.

DiGennaro, Priska, Sept. 29, to Aram and Debbi Deiner DiGennaro, Columbus, Ohio.

Gaillard, Claudine, Aug. 16, to Christopher and Sue Phaphouvaninh Gaillard, Royal Oak, Mich.

Giesbrecht, Aaron Matthew, Aug. 22, to Jayson and Gina Dueck Giesbrecht, Altona, Man.

Helling, Anna Jo, Sept. 7, to TJ and Polly Niehage Helling, Oologah, Okla.

Hilgenfeld, Eva Claire, Sept. 12, to Brian and Michelle Stuart Hilgenfeld, Whitewater, Kan.

Moser, Mason Jon, Sept. 11, to Bradley and Samantha Arnold Moser, Deer River, N.Y.

Ressler, Caleb Nathaniel, July 16, to Alan and Pamela Roermer Ressler, Atglen, Pa.

Schneider, Finn Eva, Sept. 15, to Matt and Andrea Crilow Schneider, Winesburg, Ohio.

Springer, Levi Roshan, Sept. 4, to Ryan and Nisha Springer, Elkhart, Ind.

Springer, Wade Landon, Sept. 22, to Ross and Amy Springer, Goshen, Ind.

Veltre, Olivia Pearl, Sept. 23, to Paul and Charity Nyce Veltre, Telford, Pa.

Witmer, Sarah Elizabeth, July 26, to Jerry and Tiffany Good Witmer, Dalton, Ohio.

Yoder, Micah Anjai Meitzner, Sept. 3, to Jeff and Laura Metizner Yoder, Lancaster, Pa.

MARRIAGES

Byler/Kandel: LeAnna Byler, Millersburg, Ohio, and Russel Kandel, Millersburg, Aug. 16 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Clark/Troyer: Steve Clark, Millersburg, Ohio, and Carmen Troyer, Millersburg, Aug. 26 at Martins Creek Mennonite Church, Millersburg.

Merker/Willems: Bradley Michael Merker, Toronto, Ont., and Marla Danae Willems, Protection, Kan., July 9 at All Faiths Chapel, Manhattan, Kan.

Schonberg/Spicher: Micah Schonberg, Washington, D.C., and Bethany Spicher, Washington, D.C., July 30 at Allensville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

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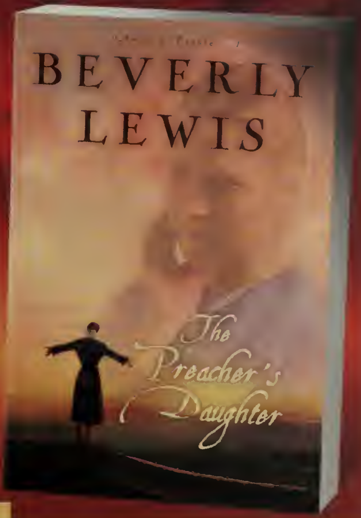

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

DEATHS

Correction: Kevin Dale Snyder was from Peoria, Ariz., not Illinois, as reported in the Sept. 20 issue. His funeral was at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Arizona.

Correction: In the Sept. 20 issue, Dorsa Mishler's sister was incorrectly listed as Ruth Mishler. Her correct name is Ruth Miller.

Alderfer, Dorothy Mae, 94, Souderton, Pa., died Sept. 9. Spouse: Titus Alderfer (deceased). Parents: Herbert and Alice Haberle Crouthamel. Children: Allen, Harold; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 14 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Boyer, Melody Ann, 42, Syracuse, Ind., died Sept. 22. Spouse: Cameron Boyer. Parents: Jack and Vernice Mendenhall. Children: Brittney, Kemberly, Riley. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

Eby, Ivan Gingrich, 82, Ont., died Sept. 10. Spouse: Irene Eby. Parents: Menno and Melinda Gingrich Eby. Children: Duane, Evelyn Sauder; five grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 14 in Ontario.

Epp, Frieda Jantzen, 101, Beatrice, Neb., died Sept. 18. Spouse: Herman Epp (deceased). Parents: Alexander and Helen Ensz Jantzen. Children: Kenneth, Alan Dean, Richard, Lucille Engbrecht; 12 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 23 at First Mennonite Church, Beatrice.

Epp, Henry D., 83, New Ulm, Minn., died Aug. 18. Spouse: Elvira Grace Jones. Parents: Danial P. and Susan Flaming Epp. Children: Gloria Jeanne, Judy Olson; two grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Aug. 27 at United Church, New Ulm.

Gable, Ivan, 82, Kidron, Ohio, died Sept. 14. Spouse: Lottie Gable (deceased). Parents: William and Amelia Gable. Children: Cindy Nussbaum, Ken, Tim; eight grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Gerber, Lydia, 88, Dalton, Ohio, died Sept. 7. Spouse: Clarence Gerber. Parents: Amos and Katie Steiner. Funeral: Sept. 10 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Gingerich, Jeremiah Joseph, 94, Bruneau, Idaho, died Sept. 3. Spouse: Letha Slatter Gingerich. Parents: Christian and Mary Gingerich Zehr. Funeral: Kermit, Verlin, Mary King, Donell, Dolores Brubaker, Rudy; 15 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 9 at American Church, Bruneau.

Graber, Viola Albright, 93, South Hutchinson, Kan., died Sept. 23. Spouse: Albert B. Graber (deceased). Parents: John and Carrie Albright Schwartz. Funeral: Sept. 27 at First Mennonite Church, Pretty Prairie, Kan.

Guth, Merle D., 73, Washington, Ill., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Hannah Hohstadt Guth. Parents: Chester and Fern Guth Sharp. Children: Karen Beyer, Janet Zehr; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 28 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington.

Hartzler, Clarence King, 85, Albany, Ore., died Sept. 21. Spouse: Ruby Gingerich Hartzler (deceased). Parents: Chester and Mary King Hartzler. Children: Anita Lindberg, Kenneth, Dale; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Albany Mennonite Church.

Herr, Arlene L., 72, Lititz, Pa., died Sept. 24. Parents: Daniel M. and Esther Leaman Shenk. Children: Cindy Eshleman, Janet Dean, Jim, John, Leon Perkins, Rose Wayland; 15 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 26 at Landisville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Hurst, Lester M., 86, Leola, Pa., died Sept. 12. Spouse: Bertha Landis Hurst. Parents: Noah and Lydia Martin Hurst. Children: Evlyn Stisher, Darryl, Kenneth, Elaine Muschlitz, Dianne Bretz; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 17 at Forest Mennonite Church, Leola.

Kehler, Edwin P., 89, Altona, Man., died Sept. 9. Spouse: Gertrude Toews Kehler. Parents; Henry and Anna Walde Kehler. Children: Cliff, Janice Peters, Jim, Arnold, Judy Martens, Conrad; 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Lawrence-Janzen, Iva Bauman, 86, Mountain Lake, Minn., died Sept. 21. Spouse: John Janzen. Parents: Carl and Ida Nachtigal Bauman. Children: Beverly June Taylor Middleton, Raedelle Jeanne Lawrence-Wallace, Ronald James Lawrence, Jack Janzen, Deborah Janzen, Jerry Janzen; nine grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; five great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at First Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake.

Lehman, Nathan, 80, Orrville, Ohio, died Sept. 23. Spouse: Eleanor Lehman. Parents: Aaron and Edna Lehman. Children: Randy, Carla Withrich, Karen Gerber, Marquita Hostetler, Curt, Carmen; 15 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Mayer, Mabel Widrick, 95, Lowville, N.Y., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Clarence Mayer (deceased). Children: Arletha Mayer, Pauline Lehman, Aaron, Wilfred. Funeral: Sept. 13 at Lowville Mennonite Church.

Miller, Jesse D., 90, Fayette, Ohio, died Sept. 12. Spouse: Pauline Miller. Parents: Uriah and Carrie Lehman Miller. Children: Dorothy Troyer, Darrell Miller, Janelle Nissley; eight grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 23 at North Mennonite Church, Wauseon, Ohio.

Penner, Mary, 97, Altona, Man., died Sept. 17. Spouse: Henry J. Penner (deceased). Parents: Cornelius and Barbara Stoesz Dueck. Funeral: Sept. 20 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Rodgers, Daniel D., 22, Elkhart, Ind., died Sept. 16. Parents: Dwight and Kathryn Weckerle Rodgers. Funeral: Sept. 23 at AMBS, Elkhart.

Shenk, Ruth Frey, 75, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 10. Spouse: Charles Shenk. Parents: Edward B. and Fannie Rupp Frey. Children: Steve, Gloria Good Shenk, Barbara, Ken; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Voth, Tena A., 95, Goessel, Kan., died Sept. 21. Spouse: Jacob Voth (deceased). Parents: Jacob and Sara Balzer Enns. Children: Joyce Stuart, Vera Davis, Carol Hoffer; seven grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater.

Whetzel, Wilma Whitmer, 86, Harrisonburg, Va., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Perry Jesse Whetzel (deceased). Parents: William and Josephine Sager Whitmer. Children: David, Phyllis, Lois, James; 10 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 14 at Zion Mennonite Church Cemetery, Broadway, Va.

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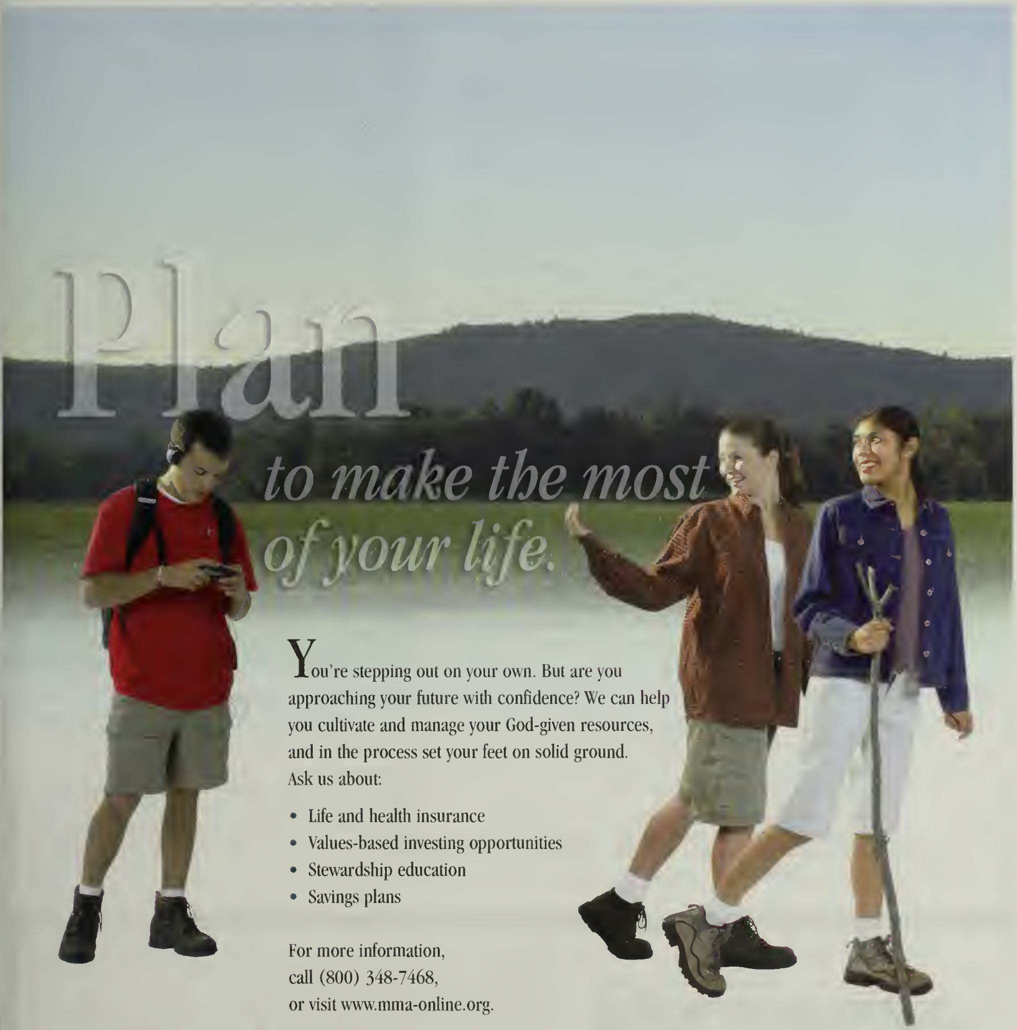
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Applications and nominations are encouraged and will be accepted until the Board of Trustees has made its selection. A letter of introduction and a current CV, or requests for more information, are to be directed to Richard M. King, President & CEO, Kittleman & Associates, LLC, 300 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 1710, Chicago, IL 60606; 312-986-1166 rking@kittleman.net.

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Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time office manager*** for the Harrisburg Discipleship Center to coordinate program and financial systems. Short-term missions and financial/office management experience preferred. Begins early December. Contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717 898-2251) by Nov. 4.

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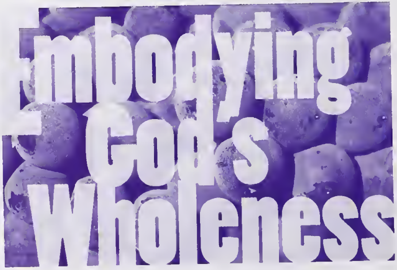

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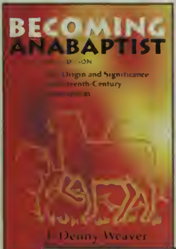

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Lost and found

Gordon Houser

One of the most popular and most talked about TV shows from last season is *Lost*, shown Wednesdays at 9 p.m. ET on ABC. It also won an Emmy last month for best drama. What about this show grabs people? And what might we learn from it?

While many may be drawn to its mystery, to the intrigue of what will happen next, what keeps people watching are the characters it draws. As viewers—or as readers—we are most interested in a story when we are interested in its characters.

Lost is about a group of people who survive the crash of a plane on its way from Sydney to Los Angeles. They find themselves on an island in the Pacific and soon go about the work of survival.

Each episode tends to focus on one or two characters, using flashbacks to show who they are and how they came to be on that flight. Thus we get multiple stories. What is more intriguing than people's lives, especially when we know where they're heading?

Another element to any good storytelling is conflict, and *Lost* offers many conflicts. The trauma of surviving a plane crash, admittedly a fact that strains credulity, brings out people's best and worst behavior. But one of the better traits of this show is that each character comes to the island with wounds and flaws. Each, in fact, is lost before they get to the island.

Jack, a surgeon whose father recently died in Australia, emerges as a reluctant leader. He treats the injured and sick and takes charge when needed. But he also faces opposition from others, including Sawyer, who seems the epitome of the selfish and self-reliant individual, and Locke, who experiences a miraculous healing and goes his own way, seeking a mysterious destiny.

One of the conflicts the show plays out is between faith and reason. Jack represents the rationalist who looks for the best solution to a problem and pursues it on his own power.

Locke represents the believer who submits himself to fate and to the mysterious forces or creatures on the island.

The show's outstanding writing makes each of the characters sympathetic, mostly by making them complex, as people are.

Early on, Jack tells Kate, a fugitive from the law and a resourceful individualist, that "we live together or die alone." In this way the show is a microcosm for any society. Unless we learn to cooperate, to live together with some semblance of justice, we will go our own way and die alone.

In this season's first episode (Sept. 21), Jack, Locke and Kate open a hatch and climb down separately. While we hear a record play "Make Your Own Kind of Music" by Cass Elliot, the show ultimately presents a message counter to that anthem. That message matches a biblical principle—really an assumption of the biblical world that feels foreign to our individualistic universe—that being in community is germane to who we are as humans.

Lost reveals the conflict between individual pursuits and the need to cooperate in order to survive.

Another theme of the show that gets much attention is its presentation of riddles, of events that cannot be rationally explained. Faith vs. reason has to do with how one approaches the world. This theme concerns the question, What is real? What is a polar bear doing on an island in the middle of the Pacific? What kind of creature snatched the pilot out of the downed cockpit? What tried to drag Locke into a pit? Why do the same numbers that Hurley used to win the lottery keep reappearing and bringing such bad luck?

Most people do not watch *Lost* in order to learn lessons about faith and reason or the need for community. They tune in because the show tells a riveting story (or stories). They watch because of the allure of mystery and to find out what happens to the characters they've come to know and like.

Nevertheless, beneath the surface of viewers' consciousness rests questions we all wonder about: the place of faith and reason, how we can get along, what is real. At some level, we're all lost and wanting to be found.

FILMS

Junebug (R) observes the meeting of cultures as a man brings his British-born wife, who runs an art gallery, to his family's home in North Carolina. It shows Christian prayer and hymn singing without condescension or preaching. The only message of this marvelous, low-budget film is that families are complex, and people change when they encounter others.

The Exorcism of Emily Rose (PG-13) combines courtroom drama and the elements of horror, a genre familiar to director Scott Derrickson, an evangelical Christian. Based on the true story of Anneliese Michel, a young German woman who suffered the same fate as the fictional Emily Rose in the 1970s, a lawyer takes on a negligent homicide case involving a priest who performed an exorcism on a young girl. While it preaches open-mindedness, there's no doubt where its interest lies.

BOOKS

Two more books looking at theological themes in films are **Catching Light: Looking for God in the Movies** by Roy M. Anker (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) and **Useless Beauty: Ecclesiastes Through the Lens of Contemporay Film** by Robert K. Johnston (BakerAcademic, 2004, $17.99). Anker uses the themes of darkness and light to explore God speaking to us through films. Drawing on Frederick Buechner's book *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairy Tale*, he looks at such films as *The Godfather, Chinatown, Tender Mercies, Babette's Feast, Star Wars, American Beauty* and *Three Colors: Blue*. He offers much to chew on. Johnston writes, "Movies function as modern-day parables, giving us fresh eyes to see and ears to hear." His look at films such as *Ikiru, Magnolia, Run Lola Run, Monster's Ball* and *Signs* gives us new ways of seeing Scripture.

Mennonite
Church
USA

Sharon Kennel, West Regional Conference Minister of Central Plains Mennonite Conference with her husband, Cecil, on their Nebraska farm.

This Nebraska grower produces an exceptional crop (and her corn isn't too bad, either)

Sharon Kennel knows what it takes to grow a strong conference, and she's working to ensure the yields are good. By helping cultivate Central Plains Conference into a productive organization, people like Sharon are creating a structure that encourages, strengthens and affirms congregations. God meant for us to work together – not in isolation from one another.

The 21 area conferences of Mennonite Church USA gain strength and courage from each other. Sharon and other conference leaders network and share information, ideas, visions and goals. They learn from each other by setting standards, ensuring accountability and providing resources for congregations. Though community may take a different shape from one congregation – or conference – to another, it ultimately helps the whole denomination grow.

Joyfully following Jesus *We* are Mennonite Church USA

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Everett J. Thomas

Darfur still bleeds

In a forgotten part of the world—the region in western Sudan called Darfur—more people have died during a 30-month-old civil war than the combined total deaths caused by the attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, the tsunami on Dec. 26, 2004, and recent hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"The Darfur war has pitted ethnic black Darfurians against government troops and their proxies—sometimes described as Janjaweed—since February 2003, killing up to 300,000 people and displacing more than 2 million," says one reliable source of news from the area (www.sudantribune.com).

A peace accord brokered by the African Union seems to be coming apart. An AU spokesman confirmed that in late September a marauding group of horse- and camel-riding Arab gunmen attacked a camp of displaced Darfurians in northeastern Chad. The United Nations reported 29 refugees were murdered.

Escalating violence will destabilize a tenuous peace that allows international humanitarian aid to reach the millions of refugees displaced by the civil war. Such aid could end soon, said Jan Egeland on Sept. 28. Egeland is the head of United Nations' humanitarian operations.

"It is no longer possible to escape the full implications of international acquiescence in the fiction that African Union forces can provide adequate security for civilians and humanitarian workers in Darfur," commentator Eric Reeve said on the Sudan Tribune Web site. "Although mortality already approaches 400,000 over the course of more than 2½ years of violent conflict—and ensuing disease and malnutrition—the greatest phase of human destruction may only now be commencing."

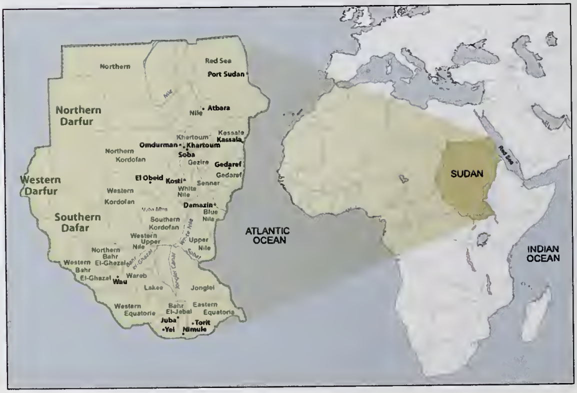
Attempting to stem the flow of this destruction, Mennonite Central Committee has been providing relief to the region and has tried to keep the crisis before the church. Working through the World Food Bank, MCC Canada as lead agency is shipping 3,000 metric tons of wheat that, if they arrive, will assist approximately 2,000 people for two to three months. But MCC's ongoing relief efforts may also be curtailed by the breakdown of the AU peace accord.

What can we do? MCC suggests several advocacy steps. These include calling on both Canadian and U.S. governments to:

- use all possible diplomatic and economic means to encourage all warring parties to stop the violence,
- support the African Union in its attempts to solve the problem,
- strengthen an arms embargo against all involved and provide humanitarian aid to those who have been driven into crowded camps by the violence,
- ensure that the perpetrators of human rights abuses in Darfur are prosecuted for their crimes,
- support and encourage the peace processes in place for the conflict in Southern Sudan.

Another suggestion comes from columnist Nat Hentoff: Ask your local newspaper to carry more news about Darfur. Or we could follow the lead of thousands of U.S. citizens who spent Oct. 4 in a day-long fast—sponsored by STAND (Students Taking Action Now: Darfur)—and then sent the money they saved to relief organizations.

Like most pogroms, the slaughter in Darfur will continue if the international community does not pay attention. All of us can pray for peace in Darfur. We must also do what we can to keep this story before us, before our church, before our neighbors and before our government.—*ejt*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Everybody is needed for the harvest

Clarence E. Rempel is a pastor at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.—Luke 10:2

The corn leaves have turned a crinkly brown and full, heavy ears are hanging low. There's a smell in the air of grain that's ripe and ready. The casseroles are in the freezer; the combine is gassed up; the drying bin is cleaned out. It's harvest time.

The urgency: Jesus uses the image of harvest to describe the urgency of gathering people into the kingdom of God. Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful." The grain is ready. The fields are ripe. It's a good harvest. Let's go get it.

I met a new hygienist at the dental office. He asked about my work, so I asked him about his connection with the church. He had attended church four times in his life with a girlfriend. "Actually, I have no religion at all," he said. "Nor does my family." Some may see a secularist, but as he told me about his nursing home volunteer work, I smelled harvest. Here was a person of compassion headed in the direction of the Jesus who calls us to love our neighbors. He just didn't know it yet. Conversation while in the dentist's chair has its limits, but I did get out a few teasers between gargles.

We can see the corn harvest; it is harder to see the people harvest. I sometimes wonder if Mennonites suffer from collective evangelistic macular degeneration. It's hard to see the harvest. The 125 empty chairs at the high school baccalaureate service were a reminder to me. At least half the graduating seniors and their families chose not to make an appearance at this overtly Christian service in the high school gymnasium hosted by the community ministerial alliance.

This tells me what other studies show—half the people of Newton, Kan., are not connected with Christ and the church in a meaningful way. Eight thousand people we see every day, work with, shop with and play with do not enjoy the life of walking with God and living for Jesus. They are like corn ripe in the field. And if harvesters don't get it in, it will eventually be lost in the storms of life, fall to the ground and rot. The harvest potential in most cities is even greater.

The workers: When it's time for harvest, everybody is needed. Everybody plays a part. Not everyone can drive the combine. Some drive trucks, prepare meals, deliver water and lunches to the field, go after parts or run other errands, care for the babies and little ones or take care of the livestock chores. Everybody has a job.

The church is like a harvest crew. Everybody is needed. A few have visible roles like operating the combine, but most work out of the limelight. We need nursery workers, children's church workers, hospitality hosts, ushers, Sunday school teachers and youth sponsors. We need someone to pick up the welcome pads, write down the visitors, make follow-up visits. We need people with gifts of faith, wisdom, helps or mercy reaching out to bless people going through hard times.

A co-worker at school invited Pamela. She came to worship a few times but disappeared. Pastor Joan wrote her occasional notes. The New Disciples Sunday school class made sure Pamela and her boyfriend were invited to class events and social gatherings. A year later Pamela and her fiancé, Michael, started coming to worship regularly. Friendships developed with members of the New Disciples class. Michael was invited to join the softball team. Two and a half years after that first invitation, Michael committed his life to Christ in baptism, and Michael and Pamela Garcia were received as members. It took many workers each carrying out their harvest role to bring in this truckload.

Everybody is needed for the harvest.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Blessing the animals

Many thanks for the beautiful cover on the Oct. 4 issue. Keith Harder's article ("What I am Learning from Horses") was just excellent. Bonding with a colt and raising it, training the horse and riding a wonderful friend is such joy. (The bumps and bites are accurate, too.) But most importantly, the communication and the trusting relationship Harder wrote about is so true. Also, the editorial ("All Dogs Go to Heaven?) was great. A well-trained dog is a life companion pet.

Re the Catholic saint, St. Francis of Assisi ("Blessing the Animals"): Francis was a poor man who astounded and, more importantly, inspired people because he took the gospel literally. St. Francis believed that we are to follow all that Jesus taught and did, with joy and without limit, to the best of our ability.

The Prayer of St. Francis is used as part of the healing programs for many self-help groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous and other groups that follow 12-step programs for healing. The entire prayer is inspirational. We usually just hear the first few lines. May each of us try to be "an instrument of God's peace," seeking to be patient, gentle, nonjudgmental communicators. St. Francis was sick most of his life and died at age 44. The peacefulness expressed in the Prayer of St. Francis is also a comfort to those who are sick. In a simple way, perhaps we can all learn from horses, dogs and gentle people who try to live their lives seeking first to follow the teachings of Jesus.—*Mary Ann Templeton, Castalia, Ohio*

When our children were growing up, they had all manner of pets, and I enjoyed them, too. But my daughter turned out to be an avid lover of animals. In her adult years she has had a Siamese cat and two Poodles (at different times). Currently she has a beautiful, smart golden retriever. She quotes Ecclesiastes 3:18-21 to back up her thinking about the hereafter of animals.—*Kathryn Hamsher, Orrville, Ohio*

I am concerned about the validity of the statement in Everett J. Thomas' editorial that animals survived the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami because they fled beforehand. During the days following the tsunami, rescue efforts were directed at finding the rapidly deteriorating human corpses. According to Indonesian rescue workers, Mennonite Central Committee workers and other international relief workers, the huge task then began of disposing of animal carcasses. There were literally thousands of them. My daughter and son-in-law are serving as MCC representatives in Indonesia and have traveled to Aceh many times. This information comes from them.

I remember a story from Thailand. An elephant crashed out of the jungle into a sea coast village. It grabbed a screaming child and took off for the hills. One hour later the tsunami destroyed the village, but the child was safe. All because of the sixth sense of the elephant.—*Glenn Zimmerly, Orrville, Ohio*

Poem is offensive

I am a Jewish man. My Mennonite wife and I have been married for 18 years. We attend Summit Mennonite Church, Barberton, Ohio, because my children would not be recognized as Jews in my faith because their mother is not Jewish.

I resent the "Bar Mitzvah" poem in your Sept. 20 issue. It borders on anti-Semitism. The poem puts down a people who have been on this earth for thousands of years, who believe in one G-d and could not believe that Jesus is G-d because they could not split him into thirds. Jesus was not "our ultimate undoing," as the poet writes. But the people who blamed us for his death were. We did not ask for pogroms, the Inquisition and the death camps of World War II. All we asked is to be allowed to follow the teachings of one G-d. For this we are forever being indicted by some individuals who just don't get it.—*Bryan Barry, Akron, Ohio*

Need a sword

The seeming "paradox" passage of Luke 22 speaks a personal gospel message to me ("Swords of the Disciples," Oct. 4). When Jesus is "numbered with the transgressors" (verse 37) and with mere humanity, "darkness reigns." (verse 53). Jesus teaches us that the world apart from his divine light is in darkness. Jesus is saying in verses 35 and 36:

IN THIS ISSUE

November is Mission Month in Mennonite Church USA, and several articles in this issue address a continuing ambivalence in Mennonite evangelism: to speak or not to speak about our faith to those who are not Christian. Amy Showalter (page 9) says that earlier in life she equated service with evangelism, and "people would observe the way I lived and see something they liked." But after a stint in the DEO program, she now wants an evangelism that "shares the good news of our lives through conversation and everyday interaction." John Drescher (page 12) says that friendship is critical to church growth and cites research that shows "more than 90 percent are brought into the church through the influence of friends and relatives." But a "quiet witness" is still the powerful way many of us serve—especially those in Mennonite Disaster Service. "They come humbly and quietly," says an expert on disaster management (page 23). "They show up, start building houses … and fill a lot of unmet needs."—*Editor*

While you were on mission for me—with my presence and care—you lacked nothing. Now in your fear and confusion—and "falling away" and lapse of faith—in that darkness you will need to worry about all these details, and you will need a sword.

This is Christ's message to me, to the church and to the whole world.—*Kenneth Seitz Sr., Harrisonburg, Va.*

Evangelizing Amish and Mennonites

As Mennonite Church USA engages in talks with other denominations, let us make sure that other churches know what Mennonite Church USA stands for. For example, the United Pentecostal Church International actually has a "home mission" that tries to evangelize Amish and Mennonite ethnic groups. I have connected with someone on several occasions about this, but there is still a mission up on their Web site. Denominational discussions would eliminate this problem. I have yet to see Mennonites evangelize Pentecostals. We're too busy helping people who truly need it.—*Jeff Hochstetler, Orrville, Ohio.*

From Down Under

I was brought up in what was a close Brethren community. Your magazine has rekindled happy thoughts of those years. Australia is such a secular country that no one seems to care or wants to know about God and what he has given them. With rare exception, our churches are dying from indifference here while people's homes fill up with technology and junk. When disaster strikes they seem to drag God out of the cupboard, but when the crisis is over they put him back. My family supports me in my church attendance but believes charity begins at home, as do most Australians. I find it hard to watch churchgoers here driving past the homeless in their BMWs on their way to church to thank God for the blessings they feel God has showered them with. I am grateful to God for my extended family and the food he puts on my table.—*Eric Fells, Logan City, Australia*

MMA debacle

The Mennonite's reporting about Skip Nagelvoort's resignation ("MMA's New Leader, Nagelvoort, Resigns," Oct. 4) contained significantly more information than Mennonite Church USA's Web site. If it is true that his departure from MMA was related to his personal bankruptcy filing, then perhaps those who comprise the boards responsible for his hiring have failed their commissions.

At Charlotte 2005's delegate assembly they publicly and verbally assured the church that Nagelvoort was God's man for this job. Perhaps they should give account to the church as to how much this debacle has cost and submit their own resignations.—*Marty Wenger, International Falls, Minn.*

Racist captions?

I'm both a reader of *The Mennonite* and a journalist. So I felt compelled to respond to the "In Brief" item labeled "Racist captions" (News Digest, Oct. 18).

If *The Mennonite* would do a little research on these things—or perhaps pay more attention to mainstream media—you might have realized that *Christian Century* brief contained inaccuracies. The photos in question were not, in fact, both Associated Press. One was an AFP photo, which is an entirely different agency. Further, the AP photographer has spoken on the issue and said that he did, in fact, see the subjects of the photo find the bag they were carrying—it was simply floating down the street in the floodwater. The AFP photographer may have similarly seen his or her subject take what they were holding from a store; we have no way of knowing.

The only way racism would be verifiably allegeable is if it were the same photographer—or at the very least the same agency—featuring shots from the same location, where the only variable was the skin color of the subjects and the wording was different for each. Let's not perpetuate these urban myths, even in short form. It's all part of responsible journalism.—*Renita Leichty, St. Charles, Ill.*

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

For me evangelism is primarily

○ telling someone about Christ (34%)

○ Doing good deeds to show the love of Christ (41%)

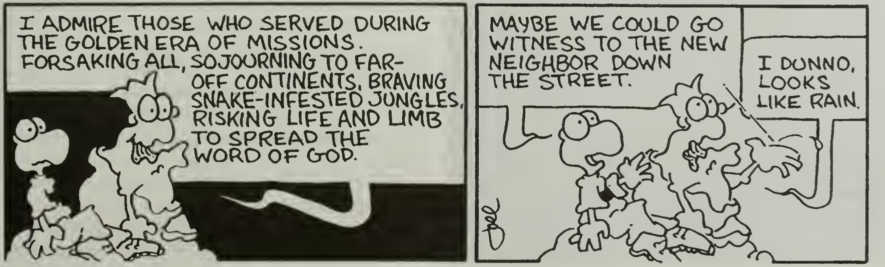
○ Making friends with people (20%)

○ Not sure (5%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


I ADMIRE THOSE WHO SERVED DURING THE GOLDEN ERA OF MISSIONS. FORSAKING ALL, SOJOURNING TO FAR-OFF CONTINENTS, BRAVING SNAKE-INFESTED JUNGLES, RISKING LIFE AND LIMB TO SPREAD THE WORD OF GOD.
MAYBE WE COULD GO WITNESS TO THE NEW NEIGHBOR DOWN THE STREET.
I DUNNO, LOOKS LIKE RAIN.

IN BRIEF

Winning speech says hope critical to peacemaking

Jesse Nathan, a 2005 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in Bible and religion, took first place in the annual C. Henry Smith Oratorical Contest with a speech that looked at how bringing hope is critical to building peace. Nathan's speech, "The Thing With Feathers," alludes to Emily Dickinson's poem that begins: "Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul." He drew on the work of John Paul Lederach, a Mennonite pioneer in conflict transformation, and his own experiences abroad, particularly in Israel, West Bank and Guatemala. "So critical is the link between hope and survival that every culture expects certain people to be what [Lederach] calls 'hope-bringers,'" Nathan wrote. *—Bethel College*

AMBS student and prof attend seminar in Germany

Leah Dawn Bueckert, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., student in the Master of Divinity program, and Daniel Schipani, professor of pastoral care and counseling, participated in a seminar Oct. 2–7 in Kaiserswerth-Düsseldorf, Germany, that looked at issues of communication across cultures and faiths.*—AMBS*

Leaders report trends among pastors

GOSHEN, Ind.—The gap is closing between the number of Mennonite Church USA congregations looking for pastors and the number of candidates available for pastoral ministry. In addition, the number of women in pastoral ministry assignments has climbed from approximately 10 percent a decade ago to 16 percent today.

Diane Zaerr Brenneman and Keith Harder, who manage the ministerial leadership system for Mennonite Church USA, reported these trends during the "Cultivating a Culture of Calling: Mennonite Perspectives on Vocation" conference held on the Goshen College campus Oct. 20-22.

Brenneman said that by mid-October there were 117 openings churchwide, with 38 candidates listed on the national registry. However, about half the congregational openings are for part-time positions, while most candidates are looking for full-time positions. Furthermore, fewer than half of all candidates processed by her office go on the national registry because most want to stay in a specific conference or region.

Harder also reported on another trend creating problems. According to a recent survey done by his office, approximately 30 percent of congregations are not compensating pastors at levels suggested by denominational guidelines (10 percent are higher and 20 percent are lower).

"Congregations that can pay more are paying what the market demands," Harder said, "but that introduces equity issues into the church."

Harder said a gap is growing between congregations able to pay their pastors more and other congregations—such as small congregations and many racial-ethnic congregations—who cannot afford to pay what the guidelines suggest.

The gathering focused on one of four denominational goals: calling new pastoral leaders for Mennonite Church USA congregations. Harder said that in addition to establishing a culture of calling, Mennonite Church USA also needs to develop a culture of discernment. (See article, page 16.)

"The process of discernment for most Mennonites is much more haphazard and individualistic [than the candidacy process in other denominations]," Harder said.*—Everett J. Thomas*

Delight Steiner

Ohio church receives $50,000 from JoinHands

Dave Lehman, representing Mennonite Men, on Sept. 11 gives a check for $50,000 from JoinHands, MM's church building program, to Joanie Richmann, treasurer at Dayspring Christian Fellowship in North Canton, Ohio. Pastor Jim Bartholomew is at right. The grant helped the congregation complete a new church building last year. *—Mennonite Church USA*

Employees given week's leave to serve

NEWTON, Kan.—Mennonite Church USA's Executive Leadership and Mennonite Mission Network are inviting employees to take up to one week of paid time to volunteer with rebuilding those communities ravaged by hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Gulf States region and Texas. From now until the end of 2006, employees may join Mennonite-related groups such as Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to serve their neighbors from afar.

Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, and Rachel Stoltzfus, director of human resources for Mission Network, hope the invitation inspires relationship building. They also hope it helps provide mutual aide for 12 months rather than only in the first rush of compassion.

Susan Mark Landis, peace advocate for Executive Leadership, hopes to join her husband, Dennis Landis, when he takes students from Central Christian School in Kidron, Ohio, on a service trip to the Gulf States region for a January interterm. Each year, Dennis, a teacher at Central, takes students on a service project. This year it will be with MDS.

Ted Stuckey, director of administration for Executive Leadership, and Schrag may also take a week to volunteer sometime later in 2006 if schedules allow.

"I fear that people will be excited about volunteering now, but in reality, it's going to take years and years to restore that region," Stuckey says. "That's why we are making this a long-term invitation."*—Mennonite Church USA*

MDS volunteers needed in Florida

The list of sites where Mennonite Disaster Service work is happening continues to grow. At the same time, the 2004 projects in Florida are in need of volunteers.

The three projects in Florida continue to work on completing houses damaged by 2004 hurricanes. New directors John and Barbara Ranck have begun work in Century, Fla., where more than 200

Church growth among Quechua in Peru 'explosive'
A young Quechua mother holds her infant. Peruvian Mennonite church leader Rubén Carrasco and Steve Shank of Eastern Mennonite Missions visited the Cotabambas region. Carrasco describes the church growth there as "explosive." He says, "Whole villages, from the leader on down, are welcoming the gospel and wanting to start churches."—*EMM*

volunteers have completed more than 100 clean-up and repair tasks. In Arcadia, nearly 700 volunteers have worked on more than 130 job sites. Volunteers at Wauchula, with new directors Ron and Elaine Enns from Manitoba, have completed more than 75 jobs, with more in progress.—*MDS*

Young adults look at morality, Matthew 5–7

NEW HAMBURG, Ont.—At Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp more than 70 young adults from across the United States and Canada, along with some from Europe, gathered Sept. 30-Oct. 2 for "Morality: Learning at the Mountain," planned by Young Adult Fellowship, a binational organization of young adults and people interested in young adult ministry. This year, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada young adults hosted the event in lieu of having their own regular fall retreat.

Besides an interactive reading of Matthew 5–7, interactive skits, a prayer walk around the campground and periods of quiet personal prayer, the participants divided into six groups and brainstormed what they considered significant moral issues the world and church need to pay attention to. These included abortion, homosexuality, gay marriage, sex, purity, racism, integrity, globalization, addictions, health care and materialism.

Three young adults—Gaohlee Vang, Matthew Troyer and Jeremy Schuh—talked about their connectedness with the Mennonite Church and their visions for its future.—*Maurice Martin for* Canadian Mennonite

World Fellowship Sunday is Jan. 22, 2006

STRASBOURG, France—Anabaptist-related churches around the world will celebrate World Fellowship Sunday on Jan. 22, 2006. Material to help plan a service for that day around a common theme have been mailed from the Mennonite World Conference office here and is also available on the MWC Web site: www.mwc-cmm.org.

Writers from India and Indonesia chose the theme "Bringing Peace in Difficult Times." They have prepared worship material that reflects the life and struggles of churches in Asia. It outlines an entire service, suggesting Scripture, hymns, prayers, stories, a sermon topic and themes for special prayer for each continental region.—*MWC*

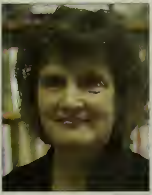
Blosser, Davis receive alumni awards at EMU

HARRISONBURG, Va.—The Alumni Association of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) has honored two of its graduates for their work in reflecting the school's vision, mission and values.

Myron E. Blosser

Myron E. Blosser, a 1983 EMU graduate and veteran educator from Harrisonburg, received EMU's 2005 "alumnus of the year" award Oct. 16.

The award is presented annually to a graduate who has been recognized for significant recent achievements in their profession, community or church.



Melodie M. Davis

Melodie M. Davis, a 1975 EMU graduate who has a 30-year tenure as a writer/producer with Mennonite Media in Harrisonburg, received the "distinguished service award" Oct. 16.

This award seeks to recognize graduates who have demonstrated in notable ways the Christian service and peacemaking emphases of the university.—*EMU*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Bluffton prof looks at theater and nonviolence

Melissa Friesen, Bluffton (Ohio) University's professor of theater, is paving a new avenue for thought and response to the dramatic arts. Friesen is working toward her doctorate at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Her dissertation topic, "The Nonviolent Spectator as Critic," concerns the connections between nonviolence and theater. Her work in this area offers a new perspective in response to the way plays are seen and interpreted that challenge a cultural stereotype that condones violence. Friesen recognizes the level at which violence is engrained in societal thinking and interaction, and hopes to apply her findings and theories to the teaching style she has developed at Bluffton.—*Bluffton University*

CEO hall of shame

CEO pay skyrocketed still further in 2004, according to a recent report—and higher-than-average pay went to execs at companies that underfunded worker pensions or dodged taxes. Defense contractor CEOs got even higher raises than average. The ratio of average CEO pay—$11.8 million—to average worker pay—$27,460—shot up from 301-to-1 in 2003 to 431-to-1 in 2004.—*sojo.net*

Mennonite evangelism

Mennonite Mission Network DEO/Shawn Delp

Posing near Denver, CO, are 2004-05 DEO team members *(from left, front)*: Amy Showalter, Katherine Goering and Jonathan Yoder; *(in back)* Katie Chaffinch and Jeff Marner.

Mennonite Mission Network DEO

Mennonite Mission Network DEO/Immanuel Sila

Above: Working on a puzzle during the February 2005 Young Adult Retreat at Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp *(from left)* are Katie Chaffinch, Jonathan Yoder and Amy Showalter.

Dale Schrag, DEO board member and Bethel College (KS) Church Relations director, visits with Katie Chaffinch and Amy Showalter following DEO's Phase Three commissioning service at Faith Mennonite, Newton, KS .

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Lessons from the Discipleship Encounter Outreach program

by Amy Showalter

My high school soccer coach used to say he wished his life was made up of drawers. He would have a teaching drawer, a soccer drawer and a family drawer. During class, he would have only his teaching drawer open, during practice his soccer drawer, and at home his family drawer. By keeping only one drawer open at a time, he could focus entirely on that particular aspect of his life.

Whatever we may wish, however, life is not made of drawers.

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 suggests God is calling us to a life that shuns the comfortable manageability of organized drawers. The law requires that grain and other produce left by reapers not be gathered for profit but left for the aliens, widows and orphans. The passage highlights a common biblical theme: Those who have much are to share with those who have little. But this passage also suggests that concern for the welfare of others should be a part of our daily life, that sharing and service are to be a part of everything we do, not simply ideals we apply when convenient.

Growing up, I equated service with Mennonite evangelism. I had been taught that people would observe the way I lived and see something they liked. Then they would ask me why I treated people the way that I did or why I made certain decisions. This would be my chance to tell them of God's love through the story of Jesus Christ.

It sounds great in theory, but eventually I realized that my friends' questions about my faith appeared subtly, and often my answers hurt more than they helped. I was dissatisfied with the way Mennonite evangelism played out in my life, but I still preferred it to the more aggressive evangelism I saw practiced in the broader Christian community.

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

During my senior year of high school I looked at service programs and chose DEO (Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach), a service program of Mennonite Mission Network, because of its third phase, which requires that I return to my home community and become reinvolved with congregational life. As I saw it, this would be a concrete way to make sure my year of service didn't become an isolated event locked away in a drawer but an experience of learning to integrate service into the rest of my life.

I looked at evangelism from a new angle. It seemed to be nothing more than sharing the story of my life with others, and this was something I could get excited about.

When I arrived in Wichita, Kan., for phase one of the DEO program, I wasn't sure what I'd gotten myself into. My excitement over the program's third phase led me to overlook its first phase. But there I was, about to begin a six-week, intense discipleship study.

I loved it, yet hated it. I had to discuss my faith honestly with near strangers, reflecting on where I saw God in my life and where I struggled to feel God's presence. But I soon learned that my willingness to become vulnerable with my teammates and DEO staff was the only way I would benefit from the experience. So I dove into my new role.

As part of the program's reading material, I discovered Brian McLaren's *More Ready Than You Realize: Evangelism as Dance in the Postmodern Matrix*. The book introduces an evangelism based on friendship, conversation and invitation rather than sales pitch, monologue and ultimatum. He suggests we are not responsible for conversions but simply called to contribute to others' faith journeys. I looked at evangelism from a new angle. It seemed to be nothing more than sharing the story of my life with others, and this was something I could get excited about.

For phase two we moved to Denver. I worked 35 hours a week at Denver Urban Ministries. I spent most of my time on Outreach, the agency's first floor, which provides immediate needs, such as food and clothing and infant items on an emergency basis to the city's low-income and homeless populations.

Denver is appropriately entitled the encounter phase. It places participants in an environment that fosters interaction with others. Here are two experiences that show my personal struggle to implement service into all aspects of my life.

Walking to work one morning, I noticed a suitcase sitting in the middle of East Colfax. The street is one of Denver's busiest, and strange sights such as this are commonplace, so I glanced at the piece of luggage without much curiosity. Waiting for the light to change, I noticed a woman standing near the curb. She exchanged a few words with a man standing on the sidewalk before dragging a second piece of luggage into the traffic.

The woman seemed oblivious to all danger in this situation—not only the cars that swerved to avoid her but the police car at the stoplight. I hoped she wouldn't be given a jaywalking ticket.

The light changed, and as I walked across Colfax I watched the police car pull a U-turn. One of the officers jumped out to help the woman cross the street. The second officer was close behind, directing traffic and bringing a measure of safety to the whole event.

I passed the first officer, the woman and her suitcases, as I walked my last block in route to work. The officer said something to her before returning to his vehicle. I can only assume it was, "Have a nice day."

I can't help but see the similarities between this experience and the story of the Good Samaritan. In truth I was slow to assess the situation, realizing what was going on only after someone else had jumped in to help. But I doubt I would have stopped to help the woman in a timely manner, even if I had understood the situation. Fear of a jaywalking ticket probably was enough to hold me back. I'm also not accustomed to looking for ways to serve strangers on the street, even after eight months working in a social service agency. The irony is incredible: I was going to work to serve, then walked right past an opportunity to do so, due to fear and lack of recognition. I had service stowed neatly away in a drawer.

Months earlier, as we walked home from work, my housemate Kate asked what I thought about inviting one of our homeless neighbors to dinner that night. I suggested we check with the team,

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hoping someone would be against the idea. My reasons were selfish: I was ready for a nice evening of relaxation before pushing to finish a college application due the next day. Fortunately, peer pressure still exists, and an hour later I was sitting across from Ron as we consumed French onion soup.

Ron is a talker, and soon he exposed us to some of his realities. As is true for many homeless, his support system is weak. Family members either are deceased or living in other areas of the country. Conversation with Ron is difficult. His drinking problem, combined with the mental effects of years spent on the streets, leads to repetitive monologues and ambiguous responses.

By the time he left, I was mentally exhausted. Ron's visits continued. At first we could expect him daily, then, as the weather warmed, his visits became more sporadic. He never wanted much, simply to heat some food or come in and talk. Some days, when Ron stopped by, I retreated to my room or the basement. On those days I simply wasn't ready to deal with one more situation I felt required my complete attention.

I didn't regret that Ron had become a part of our lives. We had reached out, acting tangibly to show we cared, and I considered that an important step. But when I avoided Ron I felt I was failing God's call to reach out to those around us. My teammates experienced the same inner turmoil. To some degree we all felt the need to set boundaries in order to preserve our emotional health as we attempted to serve effectively at our respective agencies. But we never figured out how to do this without feeling we'd left our relationship with Ron out to dry. We realized we couldn't limit our service to a "work" drawer, but we weren't sure how to make it a part of our daily interactions.

What have I learned from this DEO experience?

People enter all areas of my life, and I benefit from that experience. By being real with them, sharing my experiences and allowing myself to be vulnerable, I invite them into my life, which is the first step to service. It is only in building real relationships that I develop a natural concern for the welfare of others. That concern will show me how to apply my resources toward their needs.

We are always called to reach out to others and be in relationship with them, sharing our stories and making ourselves present in real ways.

This focus on relationships is the key to a radical form of evangelism. It's an evangelism that shares the good news of our lives through conversation and everyday interaction as we reach out to those around us.

I still believe service is connected to evangelism. I believe God calls us to serve. But this call cannot be limited, thrown into a drawer to be shut after our term is completed. It's a call to all of God's people, whether we have served overseas or spent our whole life in one place. We are always called to reach out to others and be in relationship with them, sharing our stories and making ourselves present in real ways. By pulling all aspects of our lives out of their drawers, we allow them to mix, becoming a part of each other, and this is what sets us on a path of learning to integrate service into our daily lives.

Amy Showalter is a first-year student at Goshen (Ind.) College and a member of Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Va. This article is adapted from a sermon she preached there June 26.

4 essentials

by John M. Drescher

Some years ago, while serving a short time in Italy, I was given four essentials for church growth. These continue to intrigue me, and I am persuaded today that these four are needed everywhere the church exists.

1. Friendship. We now know through much research that less than 1 percent of people come into church through such efforts as evangelistic campaigns, TV programs and publicity mailings; 5 to 6 percent come because they are attracted to the preacher; while more than 90 percent are brought into the church through the influence of friends and relatives. Evangelism is effective when it is targeted at friends and associates. And if one comes to church without having friends with whom to relate, nearly all will leave again, while at least 94 percent of active believers stay in the church because of their friendship with another person.

Evangelism is effective when it is targeted at friends and associates.

We feel accepted and sense we belong if we have friends. And those who do not have friends within the church will, except for a few brave souls, fade away rapidly. This means we begin in Jerusalem with family and friends, just as Jesus said.

We are told that Levi came to follow Christ and immediately made a great feast for people like himself—old friends, companions and publicans. He knew best what they thought and what they needed. And he desired to acquaint them with the Savior who was merciful to him.

Who knows the thinking of a businessperson better than another businessperson? So a Christian businessperson is exactly the right person to lead another businessperson to Christ. Who knows best the life of a wife and mother than another woman who has a family? So a Christian wife and mother is the perfect person to lead such to Christ. Who knows best the single life? It is the single person, whom God can use best to lead a single person to Christ. So it is with every mechanic, secretary, teacher and other occupation and situation.

2. A deliverance and healing ministry. Salvation in Christ means that we need to allow Christ to deliver us from all that binds us and hinders us from being his true disciples. Without this deliverance and healing, we remain in bondage and cannot live victoriously in Christ or be effective witnesses to the gospel.

We need deliverance from a spirit of unforgiveness, a spirit of bitterness, bondage to material things, greed, jealousy and envy, anger, lust, wrong relationships and addictions

for church growth

Each church needs to develop friendship, healing, Bible teaching and training for ministry.

of all kinds. And we need healing from past hurts and the physical conditions that result. If we would see these as the demons they are, we'd bring them to Jesus for deliverance and healing. These and others, are the demons which must be cast out in the name of Jesus.

Deliverance is needed for all that keeps us from complete surrender to Jesus in order that we'd have freedom to serve and share Christ. Think what could happen in the average congregation if there were this kind of deliverance ministry. Before there can be any progress, there is a need for this kind of deliverance and freedom from bondage and healing needs to happen.

3. A strong Bible teaching program. There can be no hope for building mature Christian character, conviction and nurturing in Christ without a purposeful, planned and clear growth in biblical truth. Just as an athlete cannot begin to succeed without knowing the rule book, so we cannot expect to grow in Christ without growing, as the apostle Paul so often prays, in the wisdom and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In a time of growing biblical illiteracy, we need to be persuaded that there can be no maturing in Christ and growth in grace and knowledge of Christ without a strong teaching of the Scripture. This will not happen with a half hour sermon once a week. It must be a deliberate and planned program of serious study of the Scripture.

4. Training for ministry. Each Christian has received a gift of the Holy Spirit to be used in the building up of the body of Christ and to witness to the living Lord. There is no exception. Unless a congregation has a clear and definite plan of equipping people from the start, the work will end in failure or become a gathering of unhappy, ineffective and faltering members. Signs that our training program is failing are that we have difficulty finding people to fill needed positions in the life of the church and that members are not leading others to Christ.

In contrast to all the complicated church programs offered today, these four essentials are in line with the Scripture, the early church and our needs today. These four are foundational steps for being the church Christ wants.

All four need to be permeated by prayer. Each work God does among his people is preceded by united prayer on the part of his people. The church always moves forward on its knees. As A.T. Pierson wrote years ago, "There has never been a spiritual awakening in any land or community on earth that did not begin in united prayer." And no congregation will be a receiving, redemptive people without being a praying body of believers.

John M. Drescher is a member of Finland Mennonite Church, Pennsburg, Pa.

No congregation will be a receiving, redemptive people without being a praying body of believers.

Living Water Community Church in Chicago, a congregation of prayer, finds healing and prophetic ways to invite God into challenging situations.

Mennonite Mission Network

A ticket to heaven?

Our behavior should distinguish us as followers of Jesus.

by Marlin Birkey

Christians are divorcing, having sex outside of marriage, ignoring the poor, showing racism and beating their spouses at roughly the same rate as the general population.

I almost cringe when I hear the question, If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would go to heaven? That question gives the clear impression that the most important thing about being saved is that one avoids hell and secures a heavenly home for eternity. Wouldn't a better question, and one much more in line with our Anabaptist theology, be, Are you aware that the way you live on earth has a lot to say about what your eternity will be like?

Ron Sider argued in his penetrating book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* that the evangelical Christian emphasis on forgiveness of sins as the core of the gospel has led to a near obliteration of a distinctive Christian witness in the world. Evangelicals are talking the talk but are not walking the walk. Transformation of life seems to be optional once we are assured our sins are forgiven and we have our ticket to heaven.

In fundamental dispensational thinking, God has no earthly agenda for the church. All God is doing on the earth is preparing a people for heaven. If that is the case, then indeed forgiveness of sin with a ticket to heaven is the core of the gospel. However, as Anabaptist Mennonites, we believe strongly that God does have an agenda for the earth. The central core of Jesus teaching and ministry was the kingdom of God, not forgiveness of personal sins. The first petition in the model prayer Jesus taught us to pray is, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth." Jesus said, "Seek first God's kingdom." Assuredly, repentance and forgiveness of sin is essential to entering God's kingdom, but once we're a part of God's kingdom, the main point is not that we're going to heaven when we die. The main point is that we are now empowered by the Holy Spirit to live on the earth as God's kingdom people, a people who are "zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14).

The early church confessed with great boldness, "Jesus is Lord." That confession is an earthbound confession. It is not needed in heaven, where God's lordship is unchallenged. It is needed on earth, where there are many rival lords. Confessing Jesus as Lord is not the way we assure ourselves and others we are going to heaven when we die. It is the way we commit ourselves to live on the earth in such a way our behavior distinguishes us from those who are not following Jesus. Followers of Jesus ought to have a distinctive Christian witness in the world. Their behavior should show that Jesus is indeed Lord.

George Barna, influential researcher of the American religious scene, has been telling us for years that according to his data, there is little if any difference in the way Christians live compared with how non-Christians live. By his calculations, as reported by Sider, Christians are divorcing, having sex outside of marriage, ignoring the poor, showing racism and beating their spouses at roughly the same rate as the general population. This alone ought to be enough for us to rend our garments, put on sackcloth and sit in ashes. What has happened to our distinctive Christian witness?

Maybe it's time we find a different way to talk about salvation, a way that includes talk about discipleship along with our talk about forgiveness of sin. Maybe it's time we stopped assuring people they have a ticket to heaven that is unrelated to the way they live on the earth. Maybe it's time we took seriously the words of Jesus: "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

Marlin Birkey is pastor of Ashton Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla. This article is adapted from a sermon he preached June 19.

GENERAL ADMISSION
ADMIT ONE
HEAVEN
MAIN GATE
GENERAL ADMISSION

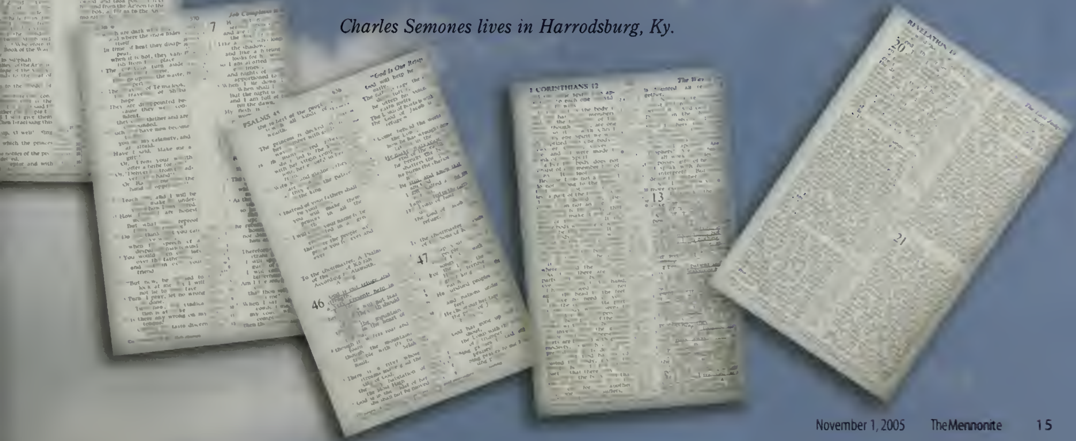
Walking through the Bible

by Charles Semones

In the kingdom of kudzu, swamp-light's what we
started out to walk the Bible by. Fox fire's aura was
a shepherd's lantern God held high so we could see
to pick our way through page by page from Genesis.
But the lexicon was for some of us as puzzling
as hieroglyphics. Exodus and Leviticus impeded us,
reminding us over and over what we could and could not do.
By the time we got to Numbers, those begats got tedious.
They were especially wearying to those of us with empty
wineskins. The desert stretched before us like the floor
of hell. There were those who shucked off loincloths
and left them lying where they fell, like snakeskins
thrumming pizzicatos—not Deuteronomy's nerve net fugue.
Our brief visit to Job's crucible was a downer. Psalms,
Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs were appled poetry,
sweet to the taste as dipperfuls of water from a newfound
spring. After Malachi, we entered the New Testament
and took the back roads through the four Gospels,
hoping we would find whatever we'd missed earlier.
Paul's epistles sat us down to supper. We'd expected
that. First Corinthians 13 was, as you might imagine,
the tastiest of the dishes on the table. We dined well,
though not to surfeit, for we'd been taught restraint
was to be observed in all one's appetites. Late in the day,
we met up with James and Peter, who were cordial
but inclined to brevity. Jude, known for being taciturn,
had even less to say. So we set our sights on Revelation,
where the roads forked off with not a single signpost
to point the way. There was a whining bafflement of wind
we found unsettling, and moonrise was an orb of blood.
The old apostle John, exiled on Patmos, enthralled by the
Apocalypse, left us a cat's cradle full of enigmatic metaphors.

Charles Semones lives in Harrodsburg, Ky.

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES
COMMONLY CALLED
GENESIS
EXODUS
LEVITICUS 23
NUMBERS 21



Pastoral transitions

by Joseph S. Miller and Diane Zaerr Brenneman

Within Mennonite Church USA, 130 congregations had pastoral openings in the past year. That means that at any given time 10 to 15 percent of our congregations are saying goodbye to a pastor, with the average length of Mennonite pastorates being five years. Changing pastors can bring sadness and loss for both the pastor and the congregation. But pastoral transitions can also be opportunities for pastor and congregation to grow spiritually and emotionally. Respected leadership researcher Peter Drucker has said that pastoral succession planning is the second most important issue for the Christian church in the United States today.

Ending a pastoral relationship with a congregation is like facing death because both require releasing control.

For those congregations and pastors who seek the Holy Spirit's direction, the departure of a pastor holds the promise of drinking from pools of God's faithfulness through grieving, releasing and celebrating a shared ministry. Those churches and pastors that do not do well at maneuvering through the shoals of ending a pastorate will likely experience spiritual and emotional stress that ripples through the pastoral family and the church family, sometimes for many years.

Roy M. Oswald states in *Running Through the Thistles* that ending a pastoral relationship with a congregation is like facing death because both require releasing control—over the life of a congregation and one's own life. Oswald makes the sobering point that how a pastor concludes his or her ministry will likely be how the pastor concludes their earthly life. For both pastors and congregations, it is also important that they find positive ways to grieve, say thank you and release each other from what has been an intimate relationship. Failure by the pastor or the congregation to grieve in healthy ways, offer thanks and release each other tends to keep people stuck in a past that can never be recovered and may even become idolatry of a presumed golden age.

CAUTION:
CHANGE AHEAD

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In the last four chapters of Deuteronomy we find the account of a major leadership transition. God tells Moses, the monumental leader of the Hebrew people, that he will not actually lead God's people into the Promised Land. Rather, God has a younger leader, Joshua, who will replace Moses. Joshua will be given the leadership of Israel. In Deuteronomy 31:1-2, Moses realizes he must be ready to accept the reality of transition in leadership.

Numbers 27:18-23 tells how leadership transition is recognized and affirmed by the way Moses commissions his successor, Joshua, as the new leader. God realized the importance of Moses' role in making Joshua a success. The words of God as spoken by Moses could not be more important to Joshua or the people: "I will not fail you or forsake you," becomes critical to Joshua as he leads the people into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:5).

The Scripture stresses that Moses is at best the penultimate leader of the Hebrew people because Moses cannot say honestly that he will never leave the Hebrew people. Only God is able to make such ultimate promises of never leaving. Wise pastors and congregations do well to see the transition from Moses to Joshua as a model, not in the details but in principle. For pastors and congregations, this can be a helpful touchstone to remind each other that only God can make the promise to never leave as the true leader of the people of faith.

The question of why God secretly and privately buried Moses has teased biblical commentators over the years. Some explain this strange burial of Moses with an eye toward our human propensity to build up monuments and institutionalize our faith. These commentators suggest that by not knowing the final burial place of the leader Moses the Hebrew people were able to not get stuck in a "golden past." The people were more inclined to move on under the direction of their new leader Joshua because they could not build a shrine, temple or city at Moses' final resting place.

Roy Oswald makes the point that when congregations or pastors experience change in their leadership they may experience what has been called "termination emotions." When there are unresolved

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

AMBS window

Making peace with God's creation

J. Nelson Kraybill, AMBS president

Fall 2005
Volume 16 Issue 1

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3 **More than books, more than students**

4 **Studer Bible collection**
Panorama

"Can we expand our Anabaptist emphasis on peace with God and all humans to include the creation itself?" Mennonite sociologist Cal Redekop asked recently in a letter to *Mennonite Weekly Review.*

His question reverberates as we read about hurricanes and resulting environmental chaos. Humans did not cause the hurricanes. But poor stewardship of the earth probably added to global climate change, making the disasters worse. Rising energy prices remind us that we are consuming irreplaceable natural resources at an increasing rate.

AMBS student Matt Hickman believes Christians must do more than join the secular environmental movement. "'Save the Planet' people make the assumption that humans ourselves can save the world," he says. "We cannot, since that is God-level redemption work."

Matt cares so much about the environment that he is helping to manage a 17-acre hardwood tree planting project at Camp Menno Haven. He also is working to reintroduce native plants at Camp Friedenswald where he is on staff. With encyclopedic knowledge of plants, animals and trees, he is passionate about his love for the natural world.

But just as it takes the intervention of God to save mortals from sin, it will take an act of God to make a "new heaven and new earth." In the meantime, followers of Jesus Christ must care for the world by Kingdom standards. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, and children of God must show the same respect for the world that God showed through the incarnation.

AMBS is preparing to build a new facility for our library and bookstore with construction and operations in harmony with these concerns. Our goal is for this "green" building to serve as a teaching tool in creation care for all who come to campus. (See page 3.)

Theology books in the library testify that restoration of creation ultimately is God's work. But we as Christians are responsible for making choices now to safeguard the natural world in obedience to Jesus, through whom all of creation someday will be set free from bondage and decay. (Romans 8:21). ●

AMBS student Matt Hickman and Nelson Kraybill look over designs for rain gardens that are planned around the new AMBS library building to capture rain water and support restored prairie grasses.

Mary E. Klassen

New AMBS library and campus center planned

Vision focuses on stewardship and hospitality

For a seminary, the library is the center of intellectual activity and inquiry, just as the chapel is the center of worship life. But while AMBS is undisputed in claiming to have the best Mennonite theological library collection in the world, the facilities which house it need some "home improvement."

As part of the Next Generation Campaign for Church Leadership, AMBS is working toward building a new facility, primarily for the library.

The vision for the new building encompasses several priorities for AMBS:

- Stewardship of God's creation with a commitment to building the library as a "green building," reflected in choices for design, construction and sustainable operation.
- Hospitality to welcome scholars—both students and guests—in a comfortable and convenient place for research, study, reflection and writing.
- Integration of new technologies and traditional materials to support scholarship of past generations and contemporary authors.
- Visibility of the library—and thus the seminary as a whole—as a place for scholarship, theological dialogue and pastoral training.

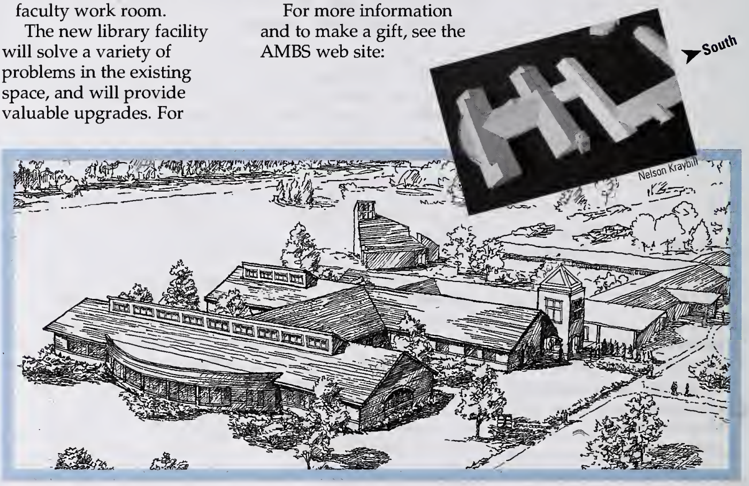
While the major part of the new building will be a new, completely above-ground library, other improvements also are included:

- new facilities for the AMBS Cooperative Bookstore;
- renovated space (now the library reading room) for the student lounge, including a coffee bar;
- renovated offices for the Church Leadership Center;
- a new foyer and gathering area with gallery space;
- reassigned space for offices, a large meeting room or classroom, and a faculty work room.

The new library facility will solve a variety of problems in the existing space, and will provide valuable upgrades. For example, all seats in the new library will have power and data connections.

AMBS is seeking contributions to complete the funding of the construction costs so that ground-breaking can occur in spring 2006.

For more information and to make a gift, see the AMBS web site: **www.ambs.edu.** Select *For Friends and Alumni*, then *Next Generation Campaign*. Or send an e-mail message to development@ambs.edu; or call 1+800-964-2627. ●



Nelson Kraybill

This artist's sketch shows the proposed library building in the foreground with the chapel in the background. Waltner Hall, the original AMBS building which now houses the library is at the back to the right. The inset photo shows a top-down view of the library model with Waltner Hall on the right.

Mary E. Klassen

The AMBS library currently consists of a reading room and workroom that were part of the original 1958 structure, a basement area for periodical stacks and a separate underground room for book stacks. Limited space, water leakage during heavy rains and lack of comfortable work stations are some of the problems in the current bookstack area that make a new library facility a priority for AMBS.

More than books, more than students

"This is the only Mennonite library that supports *only* a theological educational institution," Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian, says. "So the collection focuses on materials needed by faculty and students for training for pastoral ministry and for theological study." The result is a Mennonite theological library unequaled anywhere else in the world.

The content of materials in the AMBS library offers scholarship in history, theology, biblical studies, pastoral ministry, church leadership and much more. But many books reveal something else—who some of the original owners were. Bookplates and notations show that early resources came from Witmarsum Seminary at Bluffton College (1921–1931), Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago (1945–1958) and H.S. Bender of Goshen College.

Building on these early sources, AMBS has given priority to purchasing library materials for more than half a century. The collection now comprises not only the traditional books, journals and audio-visual materials, but also subscriptions to online collections of full text journal articles and ebooks.

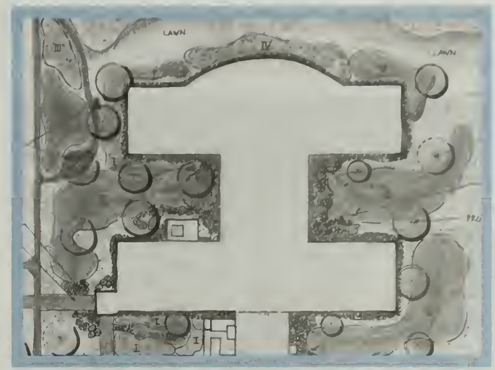
AMBS shares with Goshen College, Goshen, Ind., the Mennonite Historical Library which encompasses a comprehensive collection of Mennonite-Anabaptist materials. The Studer Bible collection is also a key component of the AMBS library (see page 4). In addition, the online catalog gives access to 22 other academic libraries in Indiana, including seven seminary libraries.

Users don't have to be on campus to take advantage of the benefits of the library. Resources are available to students, pastors and others through the online catalog and library web pages: **www.ambs.edu/Library**. Several hundred "community borrowers" check out materials and use the library to prepare for sermons, worship leading and teaching ministries. Each year the library responds to hundreds of requests by sending books and journal articles across North America and beyond.

Eileen emphasizes that the library is more than books and it is for more than students. "The library is fundamentally a place where people come for research, study, quiet reflection and access to the riches of the Christian tradition." ●

Library Facts

Current books		113,000
Projected number of books in 20 years		136,000
New books and AV materials each year		1,200
Current subscriptions		500
Circulation last year:	AMBS students	5,956
	AMBS faculty	1,756
	Community borrowers	1,192



The new AMBS Library is planned as a "green" building, with attention to design, construction and operation to make a minimal impact on the environment. Key decisions include:

- **Ground-source heat pump for heating and cooling**
- **Windows that maximize daylight and provide efficient insulation**
- **Use of locally produced building materials (40%) that can be replenished readily**
- **Rain gardens surrounding the building (shown above) to make use of runoff rainwater instead of passing it on to city sewers**
- **Restored prairie grasses to minimize need for mowing**
- **Bathroom facilities that reduce water use**

AMBS is working toward "gold" certification according to L.E.E.D. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Campaign Report

next Generation
AMBS Fund for Church Leadership

Next Generation, the fund-raising effort of AMBS, includes the following components. To find out more, see **www.ambs.edu/NextGeneration.**

	Goal	Received (US dollars) 9.30.05
AMBS Fund	$ 5,800,000	Ongoing
Library	6,300,000*	$5,727,054
Chapel renovation	1,100,000	30,700
Preaching laboratory	170,000	Fully funded
Church Leadership Center	2,800,000	2,310,959
Scholarships	2,330,000	1,642,988
Endowed faculty chairs	1,500,000	1,173,898
Other		368,923
Total	**$20,000,000**	**$17,739,612** **88.7%**

*This goal was set in 2001; the current estimate is $8,000,000.

Studer Bible collection enhances history and worldwide scope of AMBS library

Mary E. Klassen

Eileen Saner, AMBS librarian and director of educational resources, explores a carefully reproduced copy of the Gutenberg Bible, a donation from Gerald Studer, who has turned over his extensive collection of Bibles to the AMBS library.

Ever since he was a teenager, retired pastor Gerald Studer has been collecting Bibles. The extensive collection he has assembled spans the world and nearly five hundred years of printing history. Gerald chose the AMBS library to be the repository of his collection and recently, as he moved to a retirement home in Souderton, Pa., he made his final donation.

The six boxes that came to the AMBS library this summer included several items that are considered most valuable to collectors. Among them is a two-volume facsimile of the Gutenberg Bible, early nineteenth century printings of the Bible and New Testament and three English translations done by women.

Earlier donations from Gerald included an extensive collection of Bible story books with early 20th century imprints. Some of these have been added to the AMBS collection and duplicates were added to the Goshen College Library curriculum collection. Historic volumes will be placed in a special children's area in the new AMBS library building.

In addition to rare, old copies of the Bible, Gerald collected Bibles in many languages of the world—more than 800 languages, he has reported. AMBS has completed the cataloging of all non-English Bibles and portions of scripture, and an alphabetical list by language is available on request from AMBS Librarian, Eileen Saner, esaner@ambs.edu. ●

Panorama

Faculty on the road

You can find out when faculty members are scheduled to speak in your area. A list of faculty travel is at **www.ambs.edu;** Select *Church Leadership Center,* then *Faculty on the Road.*

Pastors Week 2006

A focus on important events in congregational life is planned as Pastors Week (January 23–26, 2006) looks at weddings, funerals, baptisms and communion. Speakers include Alan Kreider, Gayle Gerber Koontz, John Rempel, Irma Fast Dueck and Eleanor Kreider. See more at **www.ambs.edu;** select *Church Leadership Center,* then *Pastors Week.*

Alumni News

David L. Myers (Master of Divinity 1991) is executive director of Teen Living Programs in Chicago, Ill.

Linda Gehman Peachey (Master of Divinity 2004) is director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Women's Concerns Program.

Steven M. Nolt (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1994) and Thomas J. Meyers are authors of *An Amish Patchwork: Indiana's Old Orders in the Modern World,* published in February 2005 by Indiana University Press.

Tim Schultz (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 2000) is youth minister at Clarence Center/Akron Mennonite Church and he continues studies at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.

Fall 2005
Volume 16 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor and Designer: Mary E. Klassen

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

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Lessons for pastors and congregations when there is a change in pastoral leadership

negative termination emotions with a departing pastor, churches may end up in an emotionally frozen state. Such a condition keeps the congregation or pastor from being able to move forward. This is often exhibited in not being able to make decisions as a congregation. This phenomenon also works for pastors who have left their congregations with unresolved issues. These pastors often find that they struggle to function in a new pastorate at the level they expect of themselves.

We make plans for leadership transition because Jesus himself made such plans. In a sense Jesus was planning for his own departure from day one of his ministry. That planning became more focused throughout his ministry, even to the point of naming Peter as one who would assume a special leadership role. Unlike Jesus or Moses, pastors today do not select or commission their successors—a procedure that can be part of the grief and loss and must be released. A pastor can only make plans for personal transition—the congregation must take responsibility for its own transition as well as planning and selecting the next pastor.

Some suggestions for working toward healthy pastoral transitions:

1. Trust that God is involved in your transition. Claim the promise that Christ will provide what we need to fulfill what he calls us to do in ministry.

2. Congregations and pastor should welcome conference and denominational leadership as they anticipate and experience pastoral transition.

3. Be honest and open regarding the fact that someday there will be pastoral transition. Too many pastors and congregations are in shared denial that someday the pastor will leave. Wise congregations have an excellent pastoral transition as one part of their strategic planning.

4. Find the right amount of time for the transition. It is important that there be enough time to grieve and say thank you for the time of ministry together. Although four months is often recommended, there is no one-size-fits-all with regard to the amount of time and format that should be planned for pastoral transition. The size of the congregation, its history of pastoral transition, its culture and other criteria require that each congregation discern what is the best period of transition.

5. The pastor and lay leaders should work together to review the projects and ministries of the congregation and decide which ones should continue to be worked on and which projects to allow others to oversee. Leith Anderson has said that "one of the worst things a leader can do is retire from an organization after the last plan has been completed, the last building constructed, the last mortgage payment made and the last dream implemented. While this may give the departing leader a feeling of blessed completion, it leaves the organization with a curse."

6. Excellent pastoral transition is a stewardship issue. Poor transitions can result in the loss of thousands of dollars that could have been used for ministry but were squandered on false starts and dissatisfaction among the congregation's members.

7. Congregations and pastors should remember that people inside and outside the church will be watching and learning about how Christians work with grace at pastoral transition.

Joseph Miller recently made a pastoral transition from Waterford Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., to Mellinger Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. Diane Zaerr Brenneman has served as a pastor and is a denominational minister for Mennonite Church USA. Diane works closely with pastors and congregations as they move through pastoral transitions.

We make plans for leadership transition because Jesus himself made such plans.

Resources for pastoral transitions

The Elephant in the Boardroom: Speaking the Unspoken About Pastoral Transitions by Carolyn Weese and Russ Crabtree (Jossey-Bass, 2004).

Critical Moment of Ministry: A Change of Pastors by Loren B. Mead (The Alban Institute, 1986).

Temporary Shepherds: A Congregational Handbook for Interim Ministry, edited by Roger S. Nicholson (The Alban Institute, 1998).

Ministry Transitions: Resource Packets for Congregational and Pastoral Candidates (Ministerial Leadership Office of Mennonite Church USA, 1999, available free of charge at www.mennoniteusa.org)

Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions by Roy M. Oswald. et. al. (The Alban Institute, 2003).

Running Through the Thistles: Terminating a Ministerial Relationship With a Parish by Roy M. Oswald (The Alban Institute, 1978).

Pastoral Transitions: From Endings to New Beginnings by William Bud Phillips (The Alban Institute, 1988).

We need a larger purpose

John K. Stoner is a member of Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Rick Warren has sold 20 million books by reducing God's purpose to save the world to his much smaller purpose to save some souls. This is a major reduction, and it should not go unmentioned. *The Purpose-Driven Life* not only fails major tests of truth but is in fact a substantially dangerous book.

Rick Warren represents one view of Christianity as developed and interpreted by a specific tradition. Warren's view is not pure gospel, and if it is accepted as even a fair representation of the gospel it is both misleading and dangerous. It is misleading because Warren's assumptions about the content of the gospel set aside the comprehensive vision of salvation expressed through the centuries in the Bible and the church. And it is deceptive because the world is going to hell in a hand basket under the leadership of people who by Warren's definition are "saved," and of this his book gives us no warning at all.

A man who can describe the purpose of human life without mentioning God's purpose to save the world is a misleading and dangerous guide.

A man who can describe the purpose of human life without mentioning God's purpose to save the world is a misleading and dangerous guide. To reduce the salvation of the world to the salvation of some souls is not a minor oversight but a monumental disaster. We can see the difference by looking at the biblical story.

The "saving some souls" tradition stretches all the way from Israel's kings through the bureaucracies of the scribes, Pharisees and temple establishment in Jesus' time to the political and ecclesiastical projects of Constantine and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, right on through today's Religious Right neocons of the Bush administration and the Commander in Chief himself. Before you dismiss me for naming names, think for a moment. Rick Warren's book was written without naming names. Rick Warren could have (no doubt would have) written the Gospels without naming Herod, Pilate or Caesar, the scribes, the Pharisees or Caiphas.

The "saving some souls" theological tradition is a radical depoliticization and spiritualization of the meaning of salvation and the kingdom or reign of God. This tradition replaces moral behavior with ritual practice in human purpose and experience. In the world of the ancient Hebrews, ritual practice consisted of distinctions between clean and unclean people, foods and practices, and the refinement of forms of worship. Evolving forms of ritual practice have brought us today to where ritual practice is an elaborate (though usually unseen and unspoken) system for the eternal salvation of souls, including forms of worship radically divorced from the practices of incarnate human life and existence, and the fate of the earth itself.

This theological and ecclesiastical tradition is dedicated to combining the dominating power of the empire with the redemptive mission and power of the church. It is based on the proposition that good ends can be achieved by evil means, that death can promote life, violence can spread democracy and war can produce peace.

With some accuracy we can say that life is a struggle against evil and enemies. But the definitions of evil and of enemy and the power by which evil and enemies are to be overcome are disputed points. The human project and Rick Warren's project must be to address with clarity and unwavering resolution these definitions and forms of power.

The Bible's writers speak with numerous and contradictory voices on the question of what to do about enemies. But those voices fall basically into three types: annihilation, separation and reconciliation. Annihilation depicts God as an avenging, homicidal deity who drowns Pharaoh's army in the sea. Separation depicts God as a jealous, tribal God who blesses the segregated purity of the Jews and condemns all others. Reconciliation, the voice of Jesus, amplifying the voice of some of the prophets and the writer of Jonah, portrays God as a reconciling God who loves his or her enemies.

Jesus used the nonviolent power of compassion to face both personal and national enemies. Rick Warren does not advocate nonviolence or make it clear that all who claim to follow Jesus are called to do as Jesus did. The John 3:16,17 purpose of God to save the world will not be accomplished by a message diverted to saving souls.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Common prayer links two continents**—Laura Kraybill
- **The face of poverty**—Nancy Frey

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

MCC sets $1.7 million hurricane response

Includes hiring local workers, support for congregations in damaged region

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is continuing a $1.7 million response to Gulf Coast hurricanes in efforts that include hiring local hurricane response workers, supporting church-initiated responses and providing more than $700,000 of material resources to storm-damaged areas and communities sheltering evacuees.

As part of an effort to respond to Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita through local congregations, MCC has provided funds to hire workers from churches in hurricane-affected areas of Louisiana, in Houston and in Meridian, Miss., where many evacuees continue to stay.

Blanca Mackay, an MCC worker from Amor Viviente, an Anabaptist congregation in the New Orleans suburb of Metairie, is tracking the needs as church members trickle back to their homes. Many are finding their homes severely damaged. But she's also witnessing an outpouring of hope and faith amid the devastation.

"As long as we don't lose our relationship with God, that's the important thing," one church member told her.

"We have people that lost everything," Mackay says, "but they're grateful to God in the midst of everything."

Some areas of Louisiana were hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina. Others, along bayous south of Houma, La., suffered the most severe damage from flooding during Hurricane Rita.

MCC's material aid included some 12,000 health kits, more than 3,000 relief kits and more than 14,000 blankets and comforters. Some 3,600 cartons of MCC canned meat have been shipped to Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

In the first week of October, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) workers south of Houma, La., in flooded communities such as Isle de Jean Charles and Pointe-aux-Chene, went door to door delivering an MCC shipment that included 597 health kits, 229 relief kits, 10 cartons of canned turkey and items such as towels and blankets. MCC also provided funding to purchase 175 mattresses for families in the area.

The same week, MCC shipped more than 500 cartons of canned meat to Biloxi, Miss., 560 cartons to Meridian, Miss., and 800 cartons to Houston to help feed evacuees. A late September shipment to DeRidder, La., included 640 cartons of canned meat, as well as 500 relief kits and bedding materials.

On Oct. 3-5, MCC and MDS officials met with local Anabaptist leaders in the greater New Orleans area, identifying needs for reconstruction and assistance with issues such as insurance and immigration.

Rolando Santiago, executive director of MCC U.S., however, also spoke highly of local leadership for the effort and church communities' capacity to guide participants in the rebuilding process.

Church leaders in southern Louisiana are forming a committee that began meeting Oct. 12 to coordinate responses to the damage.

Santiago and others, including Mackay, note that church members were reaching out to each other even in the midst of the storm.

Groups from congregations such as Amor Viviente, Evangelical Garífuna Church and Comunidad Cristiana Internacional kept in touch after evacuating to Houston.

We have people that lost everything, but they're grateful to God in the midst of everything.—Blanca Mackay

Mackay, like other members of Amor Viviente whose houses weren't damaged, are taking in fellow members who cannot return home.

Mackay, who had to rearrange her pantry to hold all the food people have brought her, said she's reminded of the first-century New Testament church, where members held all their possessions in common.

"Everybody is sharing. Everybody is thinking about everybody else," she says.—*Mennonite Central Committee*

emu.edu/seminary

Partners in the Call

"As a student at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, I was surprised and delighted by how much the community life nurtured my spirit. I trust that students experience that same surprise today."

– Ervin Stutzman

vice president and seminary academic dean

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Publishing network sells two bookstores

Both Provident Bookstores in Indiana provided 'negative revenue' for MPN.

Two Provident Bookstores—both in Indiana—were sold by Mennonite Publishing Network on Oct. 17. According to MPN's executive director, Ron Rempel, both stores were providing "negative revenue" for the publishing entity owned jointly by Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA.

The Goshen, Ind., store was sold to Christian Light Stores, a division of Brethren In Christ Media Ministries. The manager of the Christian Light Store in nearby Nappanee, Ind., will also serve as manager of the Goshen store.

The Berne, Ind., store was sold to Jilaine and Joe Graber of Berne; Jilaine will continue as the store's manager. The store will be renamed Faith and Life Books and Gifts.

In both stores, existing employees are continuing with the new owners.

"We held consultations in both Berne and Goshen in June," says Rempel, "with conference leaders from Indiana-Michigan [Mennonite Conference] and Central District [Conference] and asked how important they saw the stores. We were candid that we had negative revenue from both stores. We wanted to test interest in both stores."

Rempel declines to say how much MPN received for the stores. Both denominations and Eastern Mennonite Missions, based in Salunga, Pa., are carrying more than $3 million in long-term debt for MPN; they knew about the pending sales.

"We kept our creditors informed," Rempel says, "and there was encouragement [to sell the stores]."

Six Provident Bookstores remain in MPN's chain. Two are located in Newton, Kan., and Wooster, Ohio. The other four are in Pennsylvania: Ephrata, Lancaster, New Holland and Souderton. Rempel says MPN does not plan to sell any of those stores.

Rempel was also candid about the challenge faced by the bookstores when he spoke to the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board meeting held Sept. 14-17 in Walnut Creek, Ohio ("Executive Board Facing Budget Crunch," Oct. 4).

"The bookstores have an illustrious history," Rempel said, "but we're not sure how they fit into our future."

Noting that the "hardest letters" he receives are from pastors who find Provident Bookstore products objectionable, Rempel also told the Executive Board, "I've come to the conclusion we can't tamper with that and remain [financially] viable."
—Everett J. Thomas

We kept our creditors informed, and there was encouragement [to sell the stores].
—Ron Rempel

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Group Venture program to close this fall

More than 15,000 people participated in urban service projects over 20 years.

Courtesy photo

Volunteers from Bethel Mennonite Church, West Liberty, Ohio, work at Westside Mennonite Church in Buffalo, N.Y., during a 2004 Group Venture service project.

They welcomed children. They gave food to the hungry. They painted and cleaned. They saw God at work in places they had never been. In the 20-year life of Group Venture, more than 15,000 people shared the love of Jesus in urban neighborhoods across the nation. From there, they went home changed.

This fall, due to changes in volunteer desires and program needs, Mennonite Mission Network and the DOOR (Discovering Opportunities for Outreach and Reflection) national board decided to close Group Venture. The decision will not keep participants from volunteering. It only changes the source for the short- and long-term service projects under the Group Venture umbrella.

DOOR will continue to offer a variety of options for short- and long-term service projects for prospective volunteers. The Mission Network partner program, which had been running the Group Venture sites, offers opportunities to serve in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Miami and San Antonio for as short as a weekend or as long as a year.

At its peak, Group Venture hosted more than 1,300 participants each summer and had 40-plus locations. In recent years the numbers decreased: Just 75 participated in 2005.

In a letter sent to Group Venture sites in early September, Del Hershberger, Mission Network's director of Christian Service, and Glenn Balzer, DOOR national director, wrote that increased costs and higher participant expectations may have contributed to lower numbers of participants. Because Group Venture is no longer self-sustaining, it is not feasible to continue the program.

Balzer says Group Venture offered opportunities for high-school aged groups to serve while reflecting on ethnicity, poverty, racism and faith in a new setting.

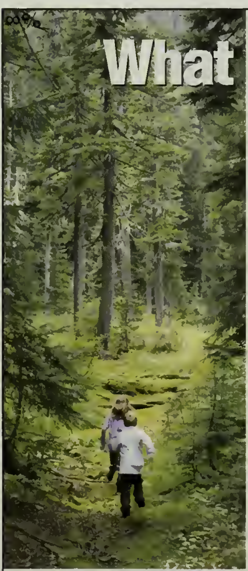
Many sites, such as Lighthouse Ministries in Canton, Ohio, will continue on their own. Darin Nissley, site coordinator, says he has already begun making contacts to bring in new short-term groups of volunteers to work in the nonprofit's after-school programs and community projects.

Nissley says what he will miss most is the leader orientation originally developed by Hershberger. Jenny Bishop Kempf, Group Venture director, has updated and led the orientations the past two years. Nissley says the orientation touched on relating cross culturally and dealing with conflict.

He noticed that short-term youth teams whose leaders received the orientation were better prepared to serve and learn in a new setting. Though Lighthouse Ministries will try to replicate the process, Nissley says, "it definitely won't be as solid as it was."

Balzer says DOOR hopes to find ways to support communities where groups served. In the future, the DOOR board may consider adding former Group Venture locations to its list of site options.
—Bethany Keener of Mennonite Mission Network

> [The orientation process] definitely won't be as solid as it was.—Darin Nissley



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EMU-trained women nominated for Nobel

Eight of '1,000 peace women' linked to Eastern Mennonite University programs.

Stella Tamang

A Nepalese Buddhist who has received trauma training at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., was among 1,000 women nominated to win as a group the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

Stella Tamang of Nepal completed a five-day workshop on "trauma awareness and resilience" at EMU on Oct. 7, the day the Nobel Peace Prize was announced. She and 10 others among the "1000 PeaceWomen" have links to EMU.

Tamang and the other women were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by a Switzerland-based committee. The committee combed the world to find 1,000 women to represent the millions of women who have devoted themselves to a future free of violence, according to the committee's Web site: www.1000peacewomen.org.

The committee spent almost three years seeking the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize for representative women peacebuilders from more than 150 countries. That effort ended when the peace prize was awarded to the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Egyptian director general, Mohamed ElBaradei.

From Oct. 14 to 23, a Zurich museum will feature the women with their photographs and stories. On Nov. 21, a 2,200-page book with more than 800 photos on the women will be available through the committee's Web site.

"I see this as an honor not for me—I don't feel I deserve it for myself—but as a special recognition of the peace work being done by women around the world," Tamang said at EMU.

Tamang is a powerful advocate for women's rights and minority groups as a result of facing discrimination in Nepal on two fronts: She is from the indigenous Lama community and a Buddhist in the world's only Hindu kingdom. The name of her organization, Milijuli Nepal, means "together." Her message is that diverse groups in society can work together for their respective rights, with mutual toleration, without violence.

Eight of the 11 EMU-linked nominees have received training through one of EMU's three flagship programs: the two-year master's program in Conflict Transformation, the six-week Summer Peacebuilding Institute or the five-day session called "Strategies in Trauma Awareness and Resilience."—*Jim Bishop of Eastern Mennonite University*

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Hesston College major only one in world

Expert finds Mennonite Disaster Service model 'most effective' for vulnerable.

A well-respected expert in disaster management says that Hesston (Kan.) College is the only college or university in the world that offers students a program focusing on the most vulnerable people in a disaster.

Brenda Phillips added that Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) employs the best approach in helping disaster survivors with long-term recovery.

Phillips made the claims during an address at Hesston College Oct. 13. Phillips is a professor in the Fire and Emergency Management program at Oklahoma State University (Stillwater). She also works at the university's Center for the Study of Disasters and Extreme Events.

Phillips defines socially vulnerable populations as "those marginalized by social, economic, geographic or political conditions—for example, racial and ethnic minorities, women and children or the elderly."

Phillips and Paul Unruh, Newton, Kan., longtime MDS volunteer and member of the MDS binational board, spent a week in southern Louisiana last month. Phillips said the needs are desperate in Louisiana and Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

"The biggest challenges are race, ethnicity and income," she said. "It's a significant problem in these two states. … In a disaster, you see social problems in a way you don't otherwise. But vulnerability is a problem not only in New Orleans. It exists all across the country."

Phillips went to the Gulf Coast last month as a first-time MDS volunteer.

"I've done research for 20 years on long-term housing recovery following disasters," she said. "I ask community leaders and others which organizations are the most effective."

The response invariably is, "Mennonite Disaster Service," according to Phillips.

"They come humbly and quietly," she said. They show up, start building or repairing homes and fill a lot of unmet needs. They offer assistance that's appropriate in the context. They live in and help the community. They work with vulnerable people. They leave a quiet witness. MDS has the best approach to long-term recovery."

Seventeen students are enrolled in Hesston College's Introduction to Disaster Response course, while 12 are taking MDS Culture I.—*Phil Richard of Hesston College*

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- Editor@TheMennonite.org
- fax 574-535-6050
- 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794

CALENDAR

A Great Plains Land Ethic (water, earth, wind, fire), Christian theologian and ethicist Larry Rasmussen, will include the following lectures and discussion panels:

"Water: Why we together must figure out how to use it", Nov. 10, 7:30 p.m. at Bethel College's Krehbiel Auditorium, North Newton, Kan. Admission is free.

"God and Earth: The everlasting covenant", Nov. 11, 11 a.m. in Krehbiel Auditorium. Free admission.

"Swirling winds on the prairie: An ethical discussion surrounding wind energy and prairie conservation", Nov. 12, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, Kan. Registration fee $30 ($25 for members of the arboretum) includes lunch. Please RSVP Dyck Arboretum at 620-327-8127.

"The fire of repentance and renewal: Calling the church to creation care", 9:30 a.m. worship service at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan. Potluck meal to follow with an afternoon workshop on practical ways to practice creation care. For more information, contact the church at 316-283-3667.

Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio, ***50th Anniversary Celebration***, Nov. 5 & 6. Saturday evening Hog Roast at 5 p.m. followed by a program at 6:30 p.m. Sunday morning worship at 9:30 a.m. with sermon by Ellis Croyle (pastor 1961-95). Noon potluck lunch to follow. All former members and friends are invited. For more information contact 419-445-3796, email zionmc@bright.net, or visit the Web site www.zion.oh.us.mennonite.net

WORKERS

Kratzer, Amy, was ordained Oct. 16 as pastor at Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Yoder, Joshua, ended Aug. 31 as pastor at Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Correction: ***Hollyn Marie Klopfenstein*** is from Archbold, Ohio, not Wapakoneta as previously listed.

Boliver, Abigail Charlotte, Sept. 23, to Loren and Barbara Barr Boliver, Lowville, N.Y.

Byler, Julia Grace, Oct. 5, to Jeremy and Jody McKinsey Byler, Harrisonburg, Va.

Church, Sebastian Charles Graber, Aug. 3, to Raymond Church and Susan Graber, Canton, Ohio.

De Mesquita, Larissa Hochstetler, Oct. 3, to Mauricio and Debra Hochstetler De Mesquita, Brasilia, Brazil.

Eash, Abbigail Lynn, Oct. 6, to Matthew and April Nofziger Eash, Goshen, Ind.

George, Dana Grace, Sept. 18, to David and Denise Soca George, South Bend, Ind.

Hiebner, Jed Allen, Sept. 6, to Calvin and Melissa Kliewer Hiebner, Henderson, Neb.

Huffman, Justice Alexander, Sept. 20, to Chris and Shannon Hurst Beall Huffman, Harrisonburg, Va.

Litwiller, Marvin Jay, Aug. 9, to Chad and Tanya Schmidgall Litwiller, Hopedale, Ill.

Miller, Elijah Dwain, Aug. 7, to Kerry and Saundra Parish Miller, Remington, Ind.

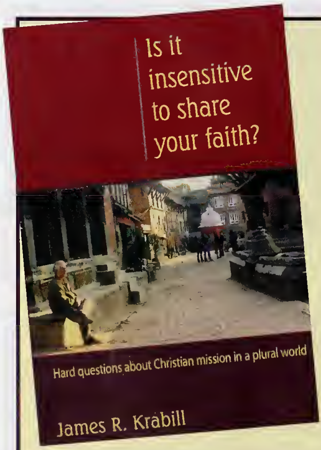
Miller, Edward Jaden Finch, Oct. 17, to Glendon and Danielle Curey Miller, White Pigeon, Mich.

Moser, Mason Jon, Sept. 11, to Bradley and Samantha Arnold Moser, Deer River, N.Y.

Newcomer, Stephanie Renee and Austin Alan (twins), Oct. 5, to Robert and Candace Bontrager Newcomer, Wakarusa, Ind.

Patrick, Taner Everett, Oct. 8, to Charles and Stefanie Blucker Patrick, Sturgis, Mich.

Regier, Reese Megan, Oct. 6, to Andrew and Valerie Ediger Regier, Henderson, Neb.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Shenk, Hailey Noel, Sept. 27, to Jeromy and Katrina Good Shenk, Lancaster, Pa.

Short, Rose Marie, July 7, to Tim and Missy Thomas Short, Akron, Ohio.

Tessman, Mariah Marie, Sept. 29, to Corbin and Lisa Haggerty Tessman, Henderson, Neb.

Unzicker, James Roger, Oct. 7, to David Unzicker and Jenelle Basinger, St. Louis, Mo.

MARRIAGES

Benin/Brubaker: Matt Benin, Harrisonburg, Va., and Heather Brubaker, Harrisonburg, Sept. 24 at Hidden Meadow Farm, Keezletown, Va.

Blick/Schrock: April Blick, Iowa City, Iowa, and Aaron Schrock, Kalona, Iowa, Sept. 30 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Garrison/Widrick: Rene Garrison, Castorland, N.Y., and Timothy Widrick, Croghan, N.Y., July 15 at First Church of New Bremen, N.Y.

Good/Nyce: Heather Good, Lampeter, Pa., and D. Joel Nyce, Telford, Pa., Oct. 8 at Mellinger Mennonite Church, Lancaster, Pa.

Kauffman/Zook: Nathaniel R. Kauffman, Belleville, Pa., and Kristin N. Zook, Belleville, Oct. 15 at Allensville (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

DEATHS

Correction: The notice for ***Harry Keith Cressman*** appeared incorrectly in the Sept. 20 issue. It should have read as follows: Cressman, Harry Keith, 80, Peoria, Ill., died Aug. 3. Spouse: (1st) Katherine Mary Crager (deceased), (2nd) Audrey Musselman Cressman. Parents: Howard Alexander and Ida Snyder Cressman. Children: Karl, Erik; four grandchildren. Memorial service: Aug. 7 at Mennonite Church of Normal, Ill.

Ahijevych, Maria Marunchenko, 92, Sugarcreek, Ohio, died Aug. 28. Spouse: Mykola Ahijevych, Sr. Parents: Stephan and Anna Dumbe Marunchenko. Children: Mykola Jr., Anatole, Svetlana Miller; five grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at First Mennonite Church, Sugarcreek.

Birky, Loren Joe, 81, Hopedale, Ill., died Oct. 1. Spouse: Velda Birkey Birky. Parents: Aaron and Bertha Schantz Birky. Children: Mark, Curtis, Jeffry, Jane Rittenhouse; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 4 at Hopedale Mennonite Church.

Brunk, Esther E. Yoder, 82, Phoenix, Ariz., died Sept. 12. Parents: Levi and Hettie Yoder. Children: J. Dale, Chene R. Cooke; two grandchildren. Funeral: Private service for the family.

Coon, Roland Leroy, 53, Archbold, Ohio, died Oct. 2. Spouse: Grace Armstrong Coon. Parents: Victor and Pauline Nofziger Coon. Children: Wendy, Jeremy, Crystal; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 7 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

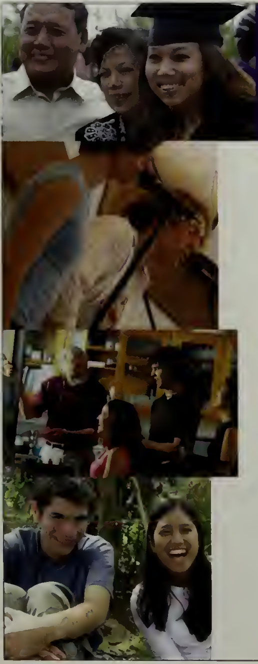
DeAntonio, Brooke A. Cochran, 47, Mountville, Pa., died Sept. 28 of a stroke. Parents: G. Ray and Lucille Hecker Cochran. Child: Christopher D. Funeral: Oct. 3 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Epp, Robert D., 91, Henderson, Neb., died Sept. 27. Spouse: Anna Peters Epp (deceased). Parents: Jacob M. and Maria Peters Epp. Children: Nola Rae, Jerry; two grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Esch, Barbara Mast, 100, Glendale, Ariz., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Henry D. Esch (deceased). Parents: Joseph J. Maust and Lydia Hochstetler. Children: Lelia Schlabach, Victor, Beulah (Boots) Raber, Myrna Schmidt; eight grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren. Burial: Sept. 28 with a memorial service at a later date at Sunnyslope Mennonite Church, Phoenix, Ariz.

Forrey, Avery James, 3 ½ months, Carlisle, Pa., died Oct. 5. Parents: Jamie and Chasity Forrey. Funeral: Oct. 10 at Hoffman-Roth Funeral Home, Carlisle.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.



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Gockley, Charles Eugene, 70, Sarasota, Fla., died Aug. 23 of pneumonia. Spouse: Verna Sweigart Gockley. Parents: Harry and Esther Witmer Gockley. Children: Jeff, Cindy Augsburger; three grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 27 in Sarasota.

Hartman, Ruth G., 68, Brutus, Mich., died Aug. 29. Spouse: Don Hartman. Parents: Menno and Mary Gregory Burkhart. Memorial service: Sept. 4 at Maple River Mennonite Church, Brutus.

Hofstetter, Lester, 92, Kidron, Ohio, died Sept. 29. Parents: Simon and Sarah Hofstetter. Funeral: Oct. 1 at Kidron Mennonite Church.

Kanagy, Ruby Miley, Belleville, Pa., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Jonathan D. Miley. Parents: Walter and Effie Vance Miley. Children: Marian Hartzler, Marilyn Schano; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

Koehn, Mabel S., 88, McPherson, Kan., died Sept. 19. Parents: Carl and Lena Wedel Koehn. Funeral: Sept. 22 at First Mennonite Church, McPherson.

Logan, Edna Hochstetler, 92, Kalona, Iowa, died Sept. 20. Spouse: William Logan (deceased). Parents: David B. Hochstetler and Emma Stutzman. Children: Dorothy, Marlan, Margaret Chapman, Mary Helen Miller. Funeral: Sept. 23 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Miller, Amos N., 84, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 1. Spouse: (1st) Miriam Brackbill Miller (deceased), (2nd) Ada Zuck Miller (deceased). Parents: Christian C. and Esther Newcomer Miller. Children: John, Janet Miller Harnish; stepchildren: M. Elaine Zuck, Donna Eigsti, Janet Peachey, Joanne Greenly (deceased); five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 3 at Kinzer Mennonite Church, Kinzer, Pa.

Miller, Larry David, 60, Kentland/Newton, Ind., died Aug. 14 in an automobile accident. Spouse: Miriam Elizabeth Neff Miller (deceased). Parents: Marvin and Lydia Mae Schmucker Miller. Children: Pamela K. Schoonveld, Sean D., Jodi M.; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 19 at Brook (Ind.) Community Center.

Miller, Miriam (Mim) Elizabeth Neff, 66, Kentland/Newton, Ind., died Aug. 14 in an automobile accident. Spouse: Larry David Miller (deceased). Parents: Paul and Bertha Landis Neff. Children: Pamela K. Schoonveld, Sean D., Jodi M.; four grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 19 at Brook (Ind.) Community Center.

Mullet, William J., Sr., 73, Sarasota, Fla., died July 10 of cancer. Spouse: Emma Mullet. Children: Bob, Bill Jr., Butch, Betty Hochstetler; 11 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: July 13 in Sarasota.

Noll, Gerald E., 69, Manheim, Pa., died Oct. 4. Spouse: Miriam Warfel Noll. Parents: Harry H. and Florence M. Binkley Noll. Children: J. Richard, Wendy L. Noll Martin; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 8 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Peters, Goldie Friesen, 83, Henderson, Neb., died Oct. 3. Spouse: Clarence Peters (deceased). Parents: Bernhard A. and Katie Abrahams Friesen. Children: Chery Siebert, Rollyn; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7 at Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson.

Raber, Esther Ummel, 89, Flanagan, Ill., died Sept. 24. Spouse: Wayne Erb Raber (deceased). Parents: Paul and Edith Urban Ummel. Children: William, Ronald, Merlyn; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 27 at Meadows Mennonite Church, Chenoa, Ill.

Solinger, Tom, 72, Dalton, Ohio, died Sept. 18. Spouse: Amy Solinger. Parents: Thomas and Catherine Solinger. Child: Charles. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Kidron (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Valverde, Daniel, 65, Mohnton, Pa., died Sept. 20. Spouse: Bernice Weber Valverde. Parents: Feliciano and Florinda Reyes Valverde. Children: Doug, Michael; four grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 25 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

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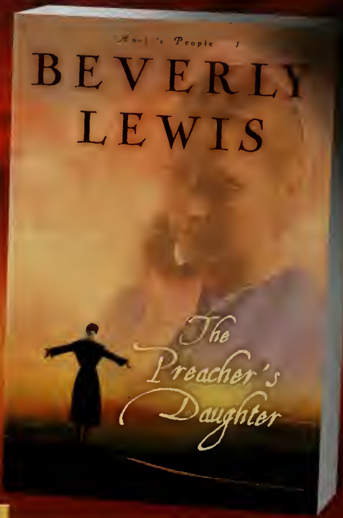

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Bethel College seeks a full-time ***director of institutional marketing and communication*** whose purpose will be to promote the mission, core strengths and planning initiatives of the college, organize the various internal and external communications of the college, and inform Bethel College publics through the news service. Responsibilities are to manage and coordinate the work of the Communication and Marketing Department. Qualifications required are a bachelor's degree in communication, public relations or English, and preferably a master's degree in communication or communication-related field; 3-5 years of progressively responsible experience in public relations, journalism, public affairs or related field; excellent skills in strategic planning, management, collaboration and, especially, writing. The position reports to the president of the college and will begin on or about Jan. 1, 2006.

Send cover letter, resumé and three professional references with email contacts to theadrick@bethelks.edu or mail to Terri Headrick, Bethel College, 300 E. 27th St., North Newton, KS 67117. Review of applications begins Nov. 4. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. Bethel College is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Go to www.bethelks.edu/about/BC for detailed description.

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Church music and choral conducting: Proven excellence in church music leadership and choral conducting. Strong preference for candidate to have doctorate (or near completion) in church music or choral conducting, will consider with master's. Demonstrated excellence in university-level teaching preferred. Anabaptist-Mennonite commitment desirable. Responsibilities: Conduct at least one of four choirs, teach undergraduate courses in church music and worship. Possible other areas: Teach music history, music appreciation, applied lessons in area of expertise or direct musical.

English/TESOL: Ph.D. in rhetoric/composition, linguistics or English (ABD will be considered), with advanced degree in TESOL. Background/experience in public school teaching desirable. Responsibilities: Direct growing TESOL program (minor and education endorsement), teach TESOL and language courses, composition and general education courses, including possible involvement in active cross-cultural program.

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Social work: MSW degree from an accredited social work program and minimum of two years of practice experience is required. Ph.D. or ABD preferred. Should have or be eligible for Ohio's practice license at Licensed Independent Social Worker level. Demonstrate effective teaching skills and experience. International experience is a plus. Responsibilities: Teach a range of introductory, human behavior social environment, mezzo-practice, human diversity and policy courses as well as occasional general education course; serve as director of fieldwork activities, placing students for spring semester internships and providing orientation for new field instructors. Scholarship is supported and service activities with community/church are encouraged.

Review of applications begins Nov. 15 and continues until an appointment is made. Compensation for these positions is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Send letter of interest, resumé or curriculum vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

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Eastern Mennonite Missions seeks ***full-time office manager*** for the Harrisburg Discipleship Center to coordinate program and financial systems. Short-term missions and financial/office management experience preferred. Begins early December. Contact Jeanette Hess (jeanetteh@emm.org or 717-898-2251) by Nov. 4.

Drift Creek Conference and Retreat Center, located in the beautiful Coastal mountains,13 miles from Lincoln City, Ore., seeks ***administrative director for full-time position*** beginning Feb. 1, 2006. Exciting opportunity to provide leadership, passion and vision in Christian Camping Ministries for children and adults. Commitment to Anabaptist beliefs and values required, college degree and related experiences expected. Responsible for administration, development, staffing and programming. Reply by Nov. 3, 2005. Contact: Ken Snyder at kenmabel@open.org, 503-362-5535 or Gwen Peachey at gpeachey@exchangenet.net, 541-754-6336.

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Maple Lawn Homes, a Mennonite Health Services faith-based organization in central Illinois, is a continuing care retirement community with revenues of $8M, serving more than 500 residents seeks passionate leader. Minimal 5-10 years senior management/executive experience in senior services arena of housing and health care highly preferred. Fund raising, direct experience or high-level workable knowledge extremely important. Bachelor degree or greater. Resumés: Charles Rinne at Maple Lawn Homes, 700 N. Main St., Eureka, IL., 61530 or charles@maple-lawn.com

Stuarts Draft Mennonite Church, located in Augusta County, Va., seeks a ¾ to FT ***lead pastor***. A congregational profile available upon request. Contact Tom Almarode at 540-337-4068 evenings or email almarode@verizon.net. Respond by Nov. 15.

FT lead pastor**, Mountville Mennonite Church**, membership 200, small town community near Lancaster, Pa. Contact Nelson Shertzer, Chair, search and discernment committee, 97 Charlestown Rd., Washington Boro, PA 17582, 717-684-0495

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Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is inviting applications for the position of ***communications director***. In this role you will serve as the chief communications officer for the denomination. Overseeing the work of a team of professional communicators, the communications director will provide overall leadership and direction for MC USA's communications program. You will also provide broad leadership and guidance to communications operations in churchwide agencies, area conferences and other parts of MC USA. This full-time position will be based in MC USA's Great Plains office in Newton, Kan. Regular travel is required. The successful candidate will have experience in communications or marketing, strong leadership and management skills and a track record for managing multiple priorities and detailed projects.

To apply for this position, submit a letter and resumé to Communications Director Search, MC USA Communications, 722 Main St., P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114-0347 or Communications@MennoniteUSA.org. A detailed position description is available upon request. Position open until filled.

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RESOURCES

The Way into Narnia: A Reader's Guide by Peter J. Schakel (Eerdmans, 2005, $14) offers valuable guidance for first-time readers of C.S. Lewis' children's classic *The Chronicles of Narnia* and fresh insights for those who have read the books often. See more on page 30.

The Divine Feminine in Biblical Wisdom Literature: Selections Annotated and Explained by Rabbi Rami Shapiro (SkyLight Paths, 2005, $16.99) includes selections from the Hebrew books Psalm, Proverbs, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes plus the Greek texts Wisdom of Solomon and Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach.

Whose Birthday Is It Anyway? 2005 ($3) is available from Alternatives for Simple Living, 800-821-6153, www.SimpleLiving.org. The 32-page booklet features seven new biblical reflections and other articles, activities, an Advent calendar/journal and suggestions for remembering the needy.

A Tiny Step Away from Deepest Faith: A Teenager's Search for Meaning by Marjorie Corbman (Paraclete Press, 2005, $9.95) is a candid account of how teenagers wrestle with spiritual questions. She focuses on issues such as intimacy, tradition, eternity, community, justice, conversion and escape.

Dubious Angels: Poems After Paul Klee by Keith Ratzlaff (Anhinga Press, 2005, $15) is the latest collection by the Mennonite poet. Order from P.O. Box 1059 5, Tallahassee, FL 32302, 850-442-1408.

Vital Christianity: Spirituality, Justice and Christian Practice, edited by David L. Weaver-Zercher and William H. Willimon (T&T Clark, 2005, $29.95), challenges the division of spirituality from social justice and looks at ways to connect them. Several of the writers are Mennonites.

Resurrecting Jesus: Earliest Christian Tradition and Its Practices by Dale C. Allison Jr. (T&T Clark, 2005, $32.95) focuses on the historical Jesus and eschatology, concluding that Jesus was not a Hellenistic wonder worker or teacher of pious morality but an apocalyptic prophet.

Beyond the Gates of Splendor (Fox Home Entertainment, 2005, $19.98 in DVD, $12.98 in VHS, 96 minutes) is a documentary about the Ecuadorian Waodani Indians and the missionary men and women who gave their lives to reach them.

Thank You for Asking: Conversing with Young Adults About the Future Church by Sara Wenger Shenk (Herald Press, 2005, $14.99) includes stories of young adults as told to other young adults who are working hard with imagination, longing and love to weave a coherent faith and way of life.

Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family and Community by Scottie May, Beth Posterski, Catherine Stonehouse and Linda Cannell (Eerdmans, 2005, $20) draws on the Bible, history and psychology to lay good foundations for children's ministry.

The Vocation of the Christian Scholar: How Christian Faith Can Sustain the Life of the Mind by Richard T. Hughes (Eerdmans, 2005, $15) is a revised and expanded version that draws from the Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran and Anabaptist traditions and shows how the Christian scholar can embrace paradox rather than dogmatism.

MennoFolk2: A Sampler of Mennonite and Amish Folklore, edited by Ervin Beck (Herald Press, 2005, $15.99), follows Beck's earlier *MennoFolk*. This second one offers 17 new studies of folklore that represents small subgroups of Mennonites and Amish. Included are Allen White's Bedtime Stories and Nicknames in the Lockport Church.

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Narnia, fog and icons: books to try

Gordon Houser

While it's only early November, you may want to think about what books you want to give or receive for Christmas—or anytime. Here is a sampling from books we've received in the past few months (or more) to help you along.

Literature: A new film version of C.S. Lewis' children's classic *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is due out next month. To help you prepare, pick up *The Way into Narnia: A Reader's Guide* by Peter J. Schakel (Eerdmans, 2005, $14). Schakel looks at Lewis' life and how he came to write the seven volumes called *The Chronicles of Narnia*, then argues that these are best understood as fairy tales, that is, tales that take place in "a realm that creates a sense of mystery and wonder in all who come there." Lewis lovers will especially enjoy this book.

Another British Christian writer is Dorothy Sayers, who has not received nearly the attention Lewis has. While Sayers is best known for her mysteries, plays and translation of Dante, she was a profound theological thinker, as Laura K. Simmons argues in *Creed Without Chaos: Exploring Theology in the Writings of Dorothy L. Sayers* (Baker Academic, 2005, $19.99). She shows the wide range of Sayers' concerns, with insights on the incarnation of Christ, the Trinity, sin and evil, business ethics, words and language, creativity and art, women's issues and more. Sayers has been too long neglected as a keen thinker who is more accessible to lay readers than most theologians. Too many "miss out on the refreshing and pungent commentary she offers on religious themes."

Another enjoyable writer is Alan Jacobs, whose *Shaming the Devil: Essays in Truthtelling* (Eerdmans, 2004, $20) addresses a wide range of interests, including writers Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Albert Camus, W. H. Auden, Iris Murdoch and Wole Soyinka, as well as "Computer Control."

Turning to Mennonite literature, Jeff Gundy has produced *Walker in the Fog: On Mennonite Writing* (Cascadia Publishing and Herald Press, 2005, $22.95), the first book-length treatment of American Mennonite writing of the last two decades. His essays celebrate the range and variety of this literature and argue that "such diversity actually strengthens and deepens Mennonite identity and culture."

Christian spirituality: Much continues to be written on this topic from various angles. *Tortured Wonders: Christian Spirituality for People, Not Angels* by Rodney Clapp (Brazos Press, 2004, $21.99) argues that classic Christian spirituality affirms the physical body, the social body and the sacraments (Eucharist and baptism). He calls consumer capitalism "the premier modern spirituality that shapes persons as unattached and alienated individuals." Much to ponder here.

Vital Christianity: Spirituality, Justice and Christian Practice, edited by David L. Weaver-Zercher and William H. Willimon (T&T Clark, 2005, $29.95), takes a different, though complementary, approach. Though more academic in its challenge of the division of spirituality from social justice, it also looks at ways to connect them in practice. Several of the writers are Mennonites.

A more devotional approach, though still of much substance, is *A Table of Delight: Feasting with God in the Wilderness* by Elizabeth J. Canham (Upper Room Books, 2005, $12). Canham draws on her own experiences to invite readers to explore the wilderness places in our lives as opportunities for encountering the holy.

Icons: Another way to encounter the holy is through the use of icons, a long-time practice of Orthodox Christians. Two excellent books to try are *Windows to Heaven: Introducing Icons to Protestants and Catholics* by Elizabeth Zelensky and Lela Gilbert (Brazos Press, 2005, $12.99) and *The Mystical Language of Icons* by Solrunn Nes (Eerdmans, 2005, $30). Both include beautiful examples and commentary. TM

FILMS

A History of Violence (R) is a powerful fable that offers the lesson that all of us are prone to violence. The film shows us extreme evil and extreme innocence, then mixes them up. While it ends on a more nuanced and hopeful note, much of this well-acted film is disturbing because it forces us to consider our own proclivities toward violence. Not for the faint of heart.

Proof (PG-13) is based on a stage play, which becomes evident. The ideas here deal with genius, sanity and relationships, but the actors' performances don't match the power of the words. The story of the daughter of a math genius who went crazy before he died engages us more intellectually than emotionally.

Grizzly Man (R) investigates Timmy Treadwell, who with his companion Amie Huguenard were mauled and devoured by a grizzly bear in Alaska in 2003. They left behind more than 100 hours of video showing Treadwell promoting himself as a protector of the bears and wanting to be a bear himself. Werner Herzog, a German director drawn to grandiose personalities and death-defying landscapes, narrates the documentary and while disagreeing with Treadwell, seeing nature as chaos rather than harmony, clearly admires the intuitive artistry of his filmmaking. This powerful film explores a man's need for finding purpose, however misguided and self-destructive.

DVDS

Kingdom of Heaven (R) uses historical figures from the crusades of the 12th century to tell a fictional tale of Balian of Ibelin. The tone reflects a current interest in religious tolerance and exalts a humanism that makes the kingdom of heaven "the kingdom of conscience." The DVD has interesting extras that look at how the film compares with the historical record. The bloodiness of the film is actually tamer than history. This may serve as a good discussion starter and provides a history lesson most of us need.

Mad Hot Ballroom (PG) is a documentary about poor inner-city fifth graders in New York who learn ballroom dancing at school and take part in a citywide competition. While it contains little in-depth analysis, the kids' comments on their hopes are moving. This hopeful film (the title is misleading) shows good things urban public schools are doing.

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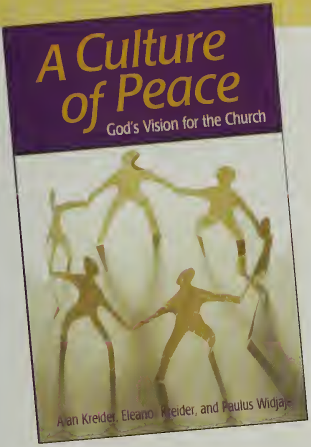
A Culture of Peace
God's Vision for the Church
Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, and Paulus Widjaja

A Culture of Peace

God's Vision for the Church

by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider,
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The Global Anabaptist/ Mennonite Shelf of Literature envisions a new book selection each year, encouraging the fellowships around the world to translate it into their own languages. The book or booklet of the year may have been published first in any one of the languages spoken within the Anabaptist-related fellowships found in 65 countries around the world. For more information, email Executive Secretary Larry Miller at LarryMiller@MWC-cmm.org.

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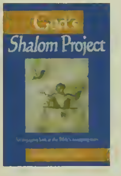

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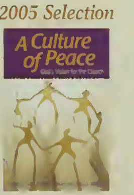

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Everett J. Thomas

Tongue-tied

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flows through us to the world.

November is Mission Month in Mennonite Church USA. It is the time to focus as clearly as we can on what it means to be a church in mission. But the way we think and talk about evangelism reveals a tongue-tied ambivalence.

While some of us are willing to share our faith openly with others, most of us are reticent to do so. Our most recent Web site poll (not a scientific sample) on page 5 reflects this reluctance. Not surprisingly, only a third of those responding think evangelism is telling someone about Christ.

More compelling evidence is the exponential growth in giving to relief and service agencies such as Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Disaster Service, while giving to our mission agencies plateaus or drifts lower. We are glad to give a cup of cold water in the name of Christ but seemingly less interested in naming Christ to the person who drinks the water we offer.

This reluctance is probably the result of our fear of coercion. It is repugnant to most of us to think we may be manipulating another person into becoming a Christian. So we reassure ourselves with the words of St. Francis: Preach the gospel and, if necessary, use words.

Speaking about God's healing and hope to those in need may be the best relief and service work we can do.

But we live in a different time and culture from St. Francis of Assisi. This is not the early 13th century, when Christian armies in Europe fought against each other and governments were run by popes and bishops who ignored the poor and disenfranchised.

God worked through St. Francis in a way unique to his era. God is also at work now in ways unique to our times. So our response to the way God is working must be an expression of our faithfulness in the world in which we live.

One form of this faithfulness is to change the way we think about missions. At times, the effort needed from us is not just material aid or education. God's healing and hope already exist in the world, and explaining where this healing and hope comes from may be the best relief and service work we can do for those in need.

The Vision: Healing and Hope statement (above) was adopted by our predecessor denominations in 1995. Ten years later, it remains the vision statement for Mennonite Church USA. But if we are coming to new understandings about being a missional church, perhaps the words "so that" should be replaced. It may be more appropriate to talk about "joining in with God's healing and hope" that already exists in the world. Such a change would reflect our language over the past five years. It recognizes that God is already at work all around us, and our job is to get on board with what God is already doing.

"I no longer think of myself as building the reign of God," says Susan Classen in the article we published Oct. 18 ("From Sawdust into Cabin"). "I think of myself as a participant in that process that has been unfolding since the beginning of time and will continue to unfold throughout the ages. I frequently remind myself that I am essential to the process but not indispensable and that I am responsible only for the piece that has been given to me."

Understanding that a missional church is essential but not indispensable is different from the call to build communities of faith *so that* God's healing and hope flow *through us* to the world.

"We have shifted from a sense of 'oughtness' and obligation," says Mennonite Mission Network executive director Stanley Green, "to ... observing what God is doing in the world and aligning ourselves [with God's activity]."

This is a new discipline for many of us. The discernment we need—individually and corporately—will change assumptions about our effectiveness. Instead of a vision that says we need to grow as faith communities so that God's healing and hope flow through us, we are being called to join God's Spirit, which offers healing and hope from the beginning of time through eternity. As we do that, it is also right to speak of Jesus.—*ejt*

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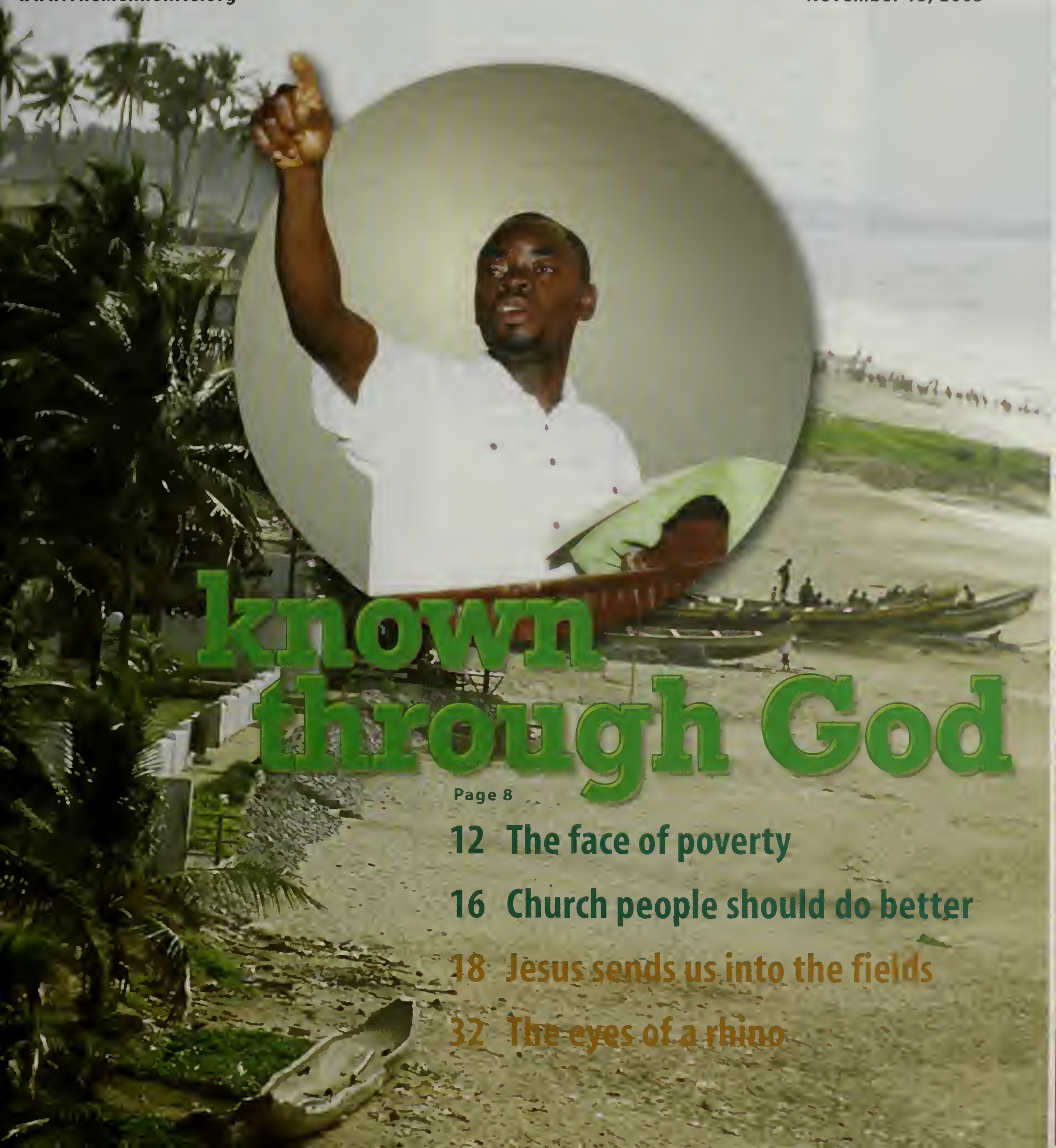
November 15, 2005



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November seeds

Anne Stuckey is associate pastor at Zion Mennonite Church in Archbold, Ohio.

Where I live, the skies turn gray in November. The clouds swarm, as if accumulating a critical mass in order to make their reign sure. The sun takes a vacation in the south during this month, and I seem to attend more funerals during November than I care to remember. Some days it feels as if everyone and everything beautiful is dying.

November is not a month that lifts the spirit. Instead it is a month of mourning. I mourn the decisive loss of the summer season and the loss of dear ones who are now with the Lord. I mourn the draining of color from the world with the death of grasses and flowers. Life once green, yellow and red now stands brown. I yearn for the spring and the return of life. This season and the coming winter seem too colorless to me to be truly alive.

However, I confess I have not always had eyes to see what God is doing during November. Instead I have kept my head low and completely missed the beginning of life that occurs during this month. I have used a jacket against the cold and tried to dodge the rain-snow mix. I was always taught, "Ignore the cold and it will go away." I have also tried to ignore Jesus' words, "Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never more than a grain of wheat" (John 12:24 *The Message*). But in ignoring what I don't like, I also have missed seeing God.

I now know that November is God's planting season. Many wildflowers drop their seeds this time of year, to be planted in the soil for coming growth. To God this may be the month that displays the greatest hope for the future. This is God's spring.

I now know that November is God's planting season.

During November, God measures the maturity of the seeds and tests their moisture content before they can drop. Seeds that have not had the opportunity to mature may still be planted but will not grow. If God waited to plant seeds until late winter or early spring, then heavy rains could wash the seeds from the fertile places. And if God allowed the dry seeds to drop in spring, then there would be no perennial blooms until the following summer.

Some seeds have a hard protective shell that must break down in the soil before germination can occur—just as some of us have walls. We want walls around our children and us so that we may be protected from anything that doesn't grow our dream of the good life. And in so doing, we resist the growth God has in mind.

Some seeds, such as the Tecate cypress from California, need wildfires for their cones to open up and allow the distribution of seeds. Without fire, the cone drops to the ground and rots, without ever delivering to the earth the life it holds. Christoph Probst says no one can know what secret inner ripening can come from suffering and sorrow. At times we need the fire of trauma in our lives to open us to new growth.

However, what is common to all of God's November planting is that all these seeds need a time of quiet before they can grow. Without this time of stillness, seeds may begin to grow too early and be unable to establish themselves before winter and die. Forced inaction is rarely what we would choose. We tend to think of time spent not working as a waste of time and not as a time of growth. We certainly don't see silence as essential to growth.

Yet Jesus advocated for holy inaction. "But if a [grain] is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds onto life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal" (John 12:25, *The Message*). The truth is that if we try to freeze life as it is in the good months of July and August, then we will never have any seed to plant.

The clouds may be gray, but this is God's planting season.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Young adults in the church

I appreciate the perspective provided by Jeannette S. Buller, a single ordained minister, in "Make the Church Single Friendly" (Oct. 18). I agree with a number of her suggestions. However, some of the suggestions seem contrived: number 5 (offer "to sit" with them) and number 6 ("make an effort to cultivate friendships with singles").

I would never "stay home" rather than go alone to a function. I like to go with people, but I also like to go alone. Sometimes I have more interesting interactions with a variety of people when I go alone. Also I prefer developing friendships based on common interests and compatible personalities rather than on calculated attempts to befriend someone considered different.

Some of the items mentioned in this article wouldn't be issues if people socialized according to compatible interests and personalities instead of according to marital or single status. If we relate to each other as individuals with varying personalities and interests, mingled worshiping and socializing can occur naturally.—*Laura H. Weaver, Evansville, Ind.*

Thank you to Katie Moyer for writing the perceptive and informative article relating to ministering to young adults in the church. As a (somewhat) young adult pastor (I'm 29—does that still count?), I have been faced with the questions the article raises in my own life as well as in the life of the congregation I serve.

As I reflect on my own experience since leaving home and going to college, I give thanks to God for placing people in my life who have encouraged me to remain part of a church no matter where I am. To these mentors, the important thing was that I continued to regularly attend a congregation, even if it wasn't their congregation.

Moyer writes, "Let us know our presence is valued, but don't make us feel guilty if attendance is sporadic."

To this I would add, encourage the young adults around you to regularly worship God with a congregation of their choice, because in so doing, perhaps that young adult will grow into a church leader. My own life stands as an example of such encouragement.—*Joel Short, Smithville, Ohio*

Thank you for featuring young adults in your Oct. 18 issue. The article clearly grows out of the wisdom and savvy of a young adult. I take issue, however, with the featured title on the front cover. Imagine what a difference it would make if the framing question were "How to minister WITH young adults" rather than "How to minister TO young adults."

I spend a lot of time conversing with young adults. If I were a young adult, I would take exception to this depiction of my age group that suggests we are left with the challenge of how to deal with young adults in our churches, and young adulthood itself is often more to blame for the problem than anything else.

Do young adults think of themselves as a problem to be dealt with or does this reflect a presumption about how the rest of us generally regard young adults? I hear the questions and visions of young adults as leading the way into the emerging church of the future.—*Sara Wenger Shenk, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Purpose-driven

I strongly disagree with John Stoner's scathing article ("We Need a Larger Purpose," Speaking Out Nov. 1). Rick Warren's book *The Purpose-Driven Life* may not emphasize all the traditions and doctrines of the Mennonites, but it certainly is not heresy or dangerous.

How is the world to be saved if not one soul at a time? Where is the heresy in Warren's five purposes: (1) worshiping God in all of life, (2) becoming a part of God's family by accepting Jesus as Savior, (3) following the example and teaching of Christ to become more like him, (4) using our gifts and talents to serve and build God's kingdom, (5) telling the good news of the gospel to others?

To label this book as false teaching and dangerous is preposterous.—*Al Bontrager, Topeka, Ind.*

The final sentence of John Stoner's article ("We Need a Larger Purpose") says, "The John 3:16-17 purpose of God to save the world will not be accomplished by a message diverted to saving souls." It's strange he would use verse 16 to support his posi-

IN THIS ISSUE

We continue to draw attention to mission during November with several articles. Our cover story (page 8) is the first in a series of a eight articles produced by Mennonite Mission Network under the theme "Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation." Mission work includes prayer, and "Known Through God" tells about Edward Dartey, a lay preacher in Accra, Ghana, who prays for mission workers around the world. Nancy Frey looks into "The Face of Poverty" (page 12) and asks how we might respond. Stanley Green, Mennonite Mission Network executive director, challenges us to obey Jesus' command to go into the fields, cure the sick and preach the gospel (page 18). Merv and Jan Stoltzfus (page 14) have worked in youth ministry for 28 years and have learned that "we need to invite [youth] to use their gifts today and not wait for some distant tomorrow."—*Associate Editor* tion, as it directly contradicts the rest of his statement. Jesus said he was sent "that whoever (individual souls) believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Why use space in *The Mennonite* to publish articles to which you must carefully apply a disclaimer? We can read that sort of article in lots of secular publications.—*David H. Clymer, Shirleysburg, Pa.*

I am a retired ordained minister, missionary of 20 years in Europe and member of Pilgrim Mennonite Church in Akron, Pa. I must respond to the Speaking Out by John K. Stoner, an acquaintance and friend, for I believe he has done a disservice to the readers of *The Mennonite*.

It seems to me that his article ("We Need a Larger Purpose") smacks of sour grapes. Most books written could use a more expansive view, a bigger picture, a larger purpose. He says, "It is deceptive because the world is going to hell in a handbasket under the leadership of people who by Warren's definition are 'saved,' and of this his book gives no warning at all."

The "saving some souls" repeatedly mentioned is not even the theme of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. It is all about how Christians should live a meaningful and victorious life in Christ. If that is Warren's theme, why fault him for not settling the borders of the kingdom of God? His book is anything but systematic theology.—*Paul J. Lehman, Ephrata, Pa.*

The Nov. 1 articles by John Drescher ("Four Essentials for Church Growth") and Marlin Birkey ("A Ticket to Heaven?") fed and strengthened my Anabaptist understanding and orientation. I delighted in learning that our faith tradition even extends to ecological rain gardens and native prairie grasses around the planned Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary buildings.

As I turned to John K. Stoner's Speaking Out, I hoped his writing would nourish me as it has many times in past decades. Instead, though he wrote of peace, his words were consistently inflammatory as he talked about Rick Warren's views ("deceptive," "dangerous," "misleading"). The only specific he gave (four or more times) was that Warren reduces God's purpose to "saving some souls," which is a one-dimensional characterization of a man who parted company with many evangelicals in choosing not to highlight the substitutionary atonement in his best-selling attempt at expressing Christian belief in nonchurchy words. And surely Stoner has seen the news photos of Warren and his wife in Africa investing the book's earnings in the fight against AIDS.—*Harold Miller, Corning, N.Y.*

I thank John Stoner for the critique he offers of Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Nov. 1). There is so much in Warren's book that to the theologically unwary appears to be biblical, particularly in a culture that separates means and end, process and purpose. But this popular book is yet another of the deceptive crazes that has swept through the Mennonite Church, uncritically buttressing our spiritualized violence-ridden American religion.
—*Ray Gingerich, Harrisonburg, Va.*

A missional church, dispensable?
Everett J. Thomas' "Tongue-tied" (Editorial, Nov. 1), assumes correctly (as has always been true), we live in a different time. Yet do we slough off St. Francis (a "righteous" army continues to do battle) and the indispensability of Christ's body, the church—of which Mennonites are an integral part? Thomas quotes Susan Classen's assertion that "a missional church is essential but not indispensable" in the process of building the reign of God. This is a new idea that merits careful critique. It runs counter to what Mennonites have held to for almost five centuries: the vision of Christ's call to follow him in word and deed, as his indispensable, gathered body. This nonviolent and loving Jesus must, out of necessity, remain for us who comprise his body our absolute central pillar of faith and life and dare not be attached merely as an add-on.
—*Leonard Gross, Goshen, Ind.*

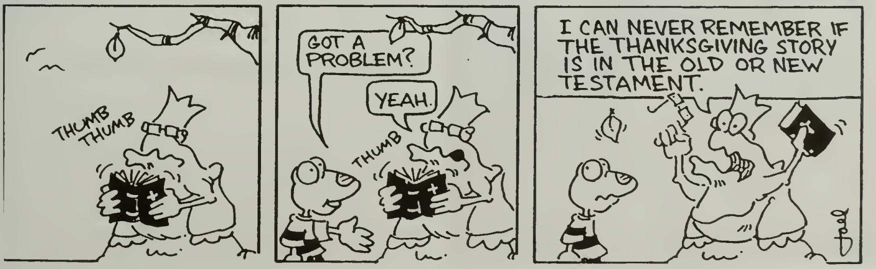
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

Our congregation:

- ○ prays regularly for mission workers around the world (48%)
- ○ keeps in touch with a congregation in another country (5%)
- ○ does both (43%)
- ○ does neither (5%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


THUMB THUMB
GOT A PROBLEM?
YEAH.
THUMB
I CAN NEVER REMEMBER IF THE THANKSGIVING STORY IS IN THE OLD OR NEW TESTAMENT.
Joel

IN BRIEF

Bluffton to offer new program

Bluffton (Ohio) University will begin offering its second adult bachelor degree completion program in August 2006—human resource management. Students will attend classes one night a week and earn their degree in as little as four semesters. The new program is designed for working adults who have a minimum of 54 semester hours (81 quarter hours) of college credit. The students also need to be employed or actively involved in the human resource function of an organization or have received some professional or academic training in human resource management. Classes will be offered on the Bluffton campus. *—Bluffton University*

Bethel accredited for teacher education program

The teacher education program at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has been accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education for the first time in its history. Teacher education was previously accredited with the Kansas State Department of Education. A team from KSDE and NCATE conducted a site visit on campus over several days last spring and formally notified Bethel of the accreditation in late October.*—Bethel College*

Hyattsville Church a 'nonvoting participant'

PINTO, Md.—Allegheny Mennonite Conference delegates voted Nov. 5 to make Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church a "nonvoting participant" in Allegheny Conference.

A majority of delegates passed the following motion: "As a result of having been found to be inconsistent with the 'Membership Guidelines' of Mennonite Church USA, Hyattsville Mennonite Church [members] will be nonvoting participants in Allegheny Mennonite Conference and in Mennonite Church USA as long as its membership policy remains inconsistent with the membership guidelines of Mennonite Church USA. Unless full participation is reinstated, members of Hyattsville Mennonite Church may not hold elected positions in either Allegheny Mennonite Conference or Mennonite Church USA."

At Allegheny's spring assembly on March 5, a majority of delegates said that Hyattsville's policy of accepting into membership gay and lesbian Christians who are in committed relationships is inconsistent with Mennonite Church USA membership guidelines (see March 15, page 6). The March action was seen as "an action of counsel and not of discipline," according to Enos Tice, chair of the conference's Faith, Life and Procedures Commission.*—Gordon Houser*

Mennonite Church B.C. votes for membership

LANGLEY, B.C.—By an overwhelming margin (114 to 13), Mennonite Church British Columbia delegates decided at a special Oct. 1 meeting that their conference should remain "a full and active area conference member of Mennonite Church Canada," but each MC B.C. congregation "would be given freedom to connect and be involved in ministry at whatever level each feels called to do." These levels would be either joint MC B.C. and MC Canada church membership or MC B.C. membership only. An amendment that included just the first part of the resolution was just as strongly defeated.

The meeting concluded an 18-month discernment process by the MC B.C. Ad Hoc Committee, which received its mandate in March 2004 to look at several issues of concern and bring its recommendations to the delegate body.

Although the Ad Hoc Committee's mandate included a variety of issues, much of the early discussion at the meeting focused on acceptance of homosexuality within the church, which has been a sensitive point for many in B.C. At issue for some has been being in full fellowship with an MC Eastern Canada congregation, Toronto United Mennonite Church, which has a stated position that "sexual intimacy should be reserved for a covenanted relationship defined as a permanent, committed, loving, faithful, monogamous relationship between two adults."

In an effort to shift focus from the at times difficult discernment process a large majority of delegates voted to encourage "all churches in MC B.C. [to] get involved in the work of the Steering Committee so that MC B.C. can move ahead as we discern the vision and mission that God is giving us."*—Amy Dueckman for* Canadian Mennonite

Karen Steiner

You want fried fish with that?

Senior Chris Mast (standing) grins with faculty member Paul Gingerich (seated, left) and community members as he waits on tables at the annual Fish Fry and Country Marketplace and Auction at Central Christian High School in Kidron, Ohio.

MMA board expresses regret over process

GOSHEN, Ind.—The MMA Board of Directors expressed regret and pledged a continued review of the last MMA presidential transition process. At its meeting Oct. 29, the board heard preliminary reports regarding the prior search process.

"The MMA Board of Directors is sorry that this last presidential succession process ended the way it did," said Carol Suter, MMA board chair. "We accept ultimate responsibility for the presidential transition process."

Board members also strongly affirmed Steve Garboden, interim president and CEO, and other MMA senior staff. "Steve is a trusted and experienced leader who is serving the organization well during this transition and has our full support," said vice chair LaVern Yutzy.*—MMA*

Amor Viviente congregations still suffer

STRASBOURG, France—Javier Soler, president of the board of the Organización Cristiana Amor Viviente in Honduras, wrote to Mennonite World Conference that its churches in the U.S. Gulf States suffered greatly. For some time, he was unable to communicate with three congregations in Florida. He did learn that most of the people there lost cars, houses and the material things they left behind

omalis thank Mennonites for new fishing boats

hile a Somali boat builder looks on, Ann King-Grosh, left, and aha, chair of SAACID (pronounced "say-eed," meaning "to elp" in Somali), a Somali nongovernmental organization that a partner in Somalia of Eastern Mennonite Missions and ennonite Central Committee, try out one of the fishing boats heir efforts have helped produce.

when they fled, but it appeared no lives were lost. The loss of material things and in membership is hitting the economy of Amor Viviente congregations hard.

Many members of an Amor Viviente congregation of about 200 people in New Orleans have settled in other states, but about 50 people have begun to meet again. In many places almost no restoration can be done. Thousands of houses will have to be demolished, said Soler.—*MWC*

Calling all knitters to help Gulf States

NEWTON, Kan.—Women in Lancaster and Atlantic Coast conferences are collecting 150 prayer shawls to give to women of Gulf States Mennonite Conference at their annual retreat Feb. 25, 2006. The shawls will be knitted with prayers for the women as they minister in their hurricane-affected communities. A knitter's prayer guide has been prepared by Elaine Maust, co-pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church in Meridian, Miss.

Lancaster and Atlantic Coast representatives will wrap the shawls around the retreat participants. The event's theme, "Wrapped in God's Love," hopes to also wrap the knitters in God's love as they share this gift of encouragement.

The project is being coordinated through Sister-Link, a ministry of Mennonite Women USA. For more information, contact Elaine Good in Lititz, Pa., by Dec. 1: elgood@dejazzd.com; 717-626-9287; 304 Buch Mill Road, Lititz, PA 17543. Shawls need to be finished by Jan. 31, 2006. Instructions for making prayer shawls and the prayer guide are posted at www.MennoniteWomenUSA.org/PShawls.asp. —*Mennonite Church USA*

Counsel sought on CCT relationship

NEWTON, Kan.—As a result of support by its delegate assembly at Charlotte 2005, Mennonite Church USA is seeking further counsel from area conferences, congregations and members regarding the potential for the denomination's participation in Christian Churches Together in the USA.

Christian Churches Together is a broad forum of Christian churches—ranging from evangelical to Orthodox and Catholic traditions—that gathers on a regular basis to discuss issues, build relationships and learn from each other.

As part of that exploration process, Mennonite Church USA has sent letters to area conferences requesting additional counsel on the subject. Church leaders are inviting congregations and members to look at online information at www.interchurchrelations.org, consider the potential relationship and offer guidance that will be collected and presented to the Constituency Leaders Council and Executive Board.

A decision will be made whether to bring the item to the delegate assembly at San Jose 2007.

To submit feedback, contact André Gingerich Stoner, director of Interchurch Relations for Mennonite Church USA: AndreGS@MennoniteUSA.org or 500 S. Main, Elkhart, IN 46516-1245, by Feb. 15, 2006. Information and frequently asked questions on the topic are available online at www.interchurchrelations.org under "Recent Developments." —*Mennonite Church USA*

Martens receive MMA Journey Award

GOSHEN, Ind.—After three years of church service in Cambodia, John and Danile Martens came back to the United States with a renewed desire to live in a sustainable manner that complements their faith values about God's creation.

In "big life decisions," they have remodeled their home in Mishawaka, Ind., with environmentally friendly materials, bought hybrid cars, chose to live close to John's work to reduce their dependence on cars and eat primarily locally grown or organic foods. Within their congregation, Kern Road Mennonite Church, they have offered educational activities on caring for the environment, inspiring others to do the same.

On Oct. 23, MMA acting president and CEO Steve L. Garboden presented the Martens with an MMA Journey Award, recognizing their passionate approach to stewardship of creation.—*MMA*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

Report connects growth to support of mission work

According to a survey of 28 Protestant denominations by empty tomb, inc. in its *The State of Church Giving Through 2003*, for each dollar donated to a congregation, denominations spent 2 cents on overseas missions in 2003, down from 7 cents in the 1920s. Half the denominations grew in membership from 1968 to 2003, and half decreased. Those that grew had a higher level of overseas missions support, 2.8 percent. The support of those that decreased was less than 1 percent. Per member giving as a percent of income declined from 2002 to 2003. *—empty tomb, inc.*

Guatemala is a 'time bomb'

Church workers say Guatemala faces a health emergency and a long-term hunger crisis in the aftermath of the flooding and mud slides of Hurricane Stan in early October. "This is a time bomb," says Dr. Mario Fuentes, head of the pastoral health program for the Catholic diocese in San Marcos, one of the hardest hit provinces. Some 8,000 Guatemalans lost their homes completely. At least 654 people were killed, and 841 people remain missing and presumed dead. *—National Catholic Reporter* together sharing all of Christ with all of creation

PART 1 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Edward Quaye and Edward Dartey sing praises during a November 2004 celebration to honor Menno Simons in Amasaman, Ghana.

Known through

Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation is an eight-part series produced for *The Mennonite* by Mennonite Mission Network.

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Common prayer links two continents.

It is 3 a.m. and the Friday night prayer service in Accra, Ghana, is still going strong. In the sauna of cement walls and tin roof, sweaty bodies kneel against church pews, shouting to God. Children sleep in the aisles on reed mats while their parents pray through the night for friends, families and an Australian Mennonite couple none of them have met.

Amasaman Mennonite Church's weekly all-night prayer services are not unusual among Ghanaian churches. However, since acquiring the Mennonite Mission Network *Mosaic* mission directory in 2003, their prayer ministry extends to mission workers they have only read about.

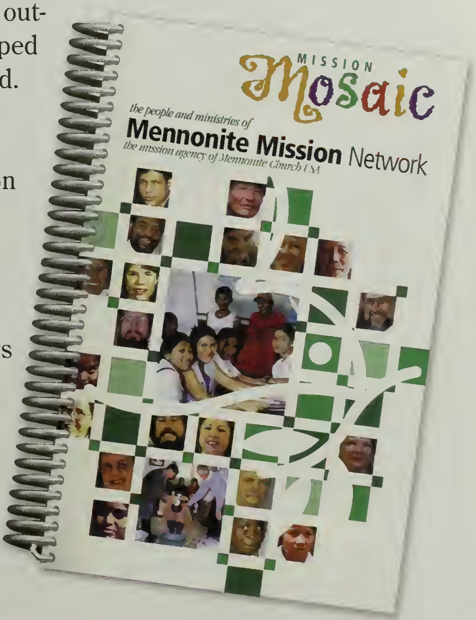
That singular email encouragement sparked a relationship that has turned into cross-continental church support.

On a sultry afternoon in 2003, Edward Dartey a 29-year-old Amasaman lay preacher, sat under the big oak tree outside his concrete-block compound in Accra and flipped through the pages of the directory, given by a friend. Dartey had discovered the Mission Network online and joined the Network's prayer partner ministry, which distributes daily prayer requests from mission workers to prayer partners via the "Prayer Vine."

Dartey sought inspiration and information about the roots of Mennonite faith. He found it in the descriptions of three mission families, including Mark and Mary Hurst leading Anabaptism seminars in Australia.

So Dartey typed letters of support to the families. His messages said his church was praying for their work.

That singular email encouragement sparked a relationship that has turned into cross-continental church support.


MISSION
Mosaic
the people and ministries of
Mennonite Mission Network
the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA

God

by Laura Kraybill

Continued on page 10

Dartey started writing to the Hursts and other missionaries because he "wanted to be strengthened and share and know what is going on in others to build the Lord's ministry."

Continued from page 9

Far-flung areas: "Since we have taught folks from all over the Pacific and Southeast Asia, we already have folks praying for us from far-flung areas. But it is humbling to have [a church in Ghana] supporting us," says Mary Hurst.

Dartey frequently traverses the dusty roads along the southern coast of Ghana to get to the nearest town's Internet café so he can write to the Hursts. The three communicate through emails, cards and messages of support from their churches. The Hursts send Dartey their newsletter, "Greetings from Oz," and Dartey, in turn, shares about his church and life.

For their birthdays this year, the Hursts received a set of turquoise and indigo tunics, traditional Ghanaian clothing, as a symbol of support.

"[I wanted] to express the good correspondence we had," Dartey says. "They are not alone. People care."

While the Hursts do not mentor or send money to Dartey, they have found ways to support his efforts beyond their prayers.

"[Dartey] was working with the youth and said that they were trying to improve themselves by reading but didn't have many books," Mary Hurst says. "So we did a cull of our personal library and sent three boxes of books for the church library."

Amasaman's library consists of 84 books, all sent by the Hursts, stacked on tables in a corner of the church building. Dartey is excited that Mennonites from several churches in his area can better understand their church background through books like J.C. Wenger's *How Mennonites Came to Be*.

MENNO SIMONS

Courtesy photo

Praying for mission work: Edward Dartey, pastor at Amasaman Church in Amasaman, Ghana

Prayer Vine

Connected to the true vine: Together, sharing all of Christ with all of creation.

Growing support on a Prayer Vine

In 1995, Marietta and Sheldon Sawatzky, already longtime mission workers in Taiwan, began a new pastoral ministry in a small Taiwanese church. The congregation, mostly first-generation believers, offered challenges Marietta knew she and Sheldon could not face on their own.

The Sawatzkys began a weekly memo asking for prayer, sent to their personal supporters over email. The spiritual support they received kept them nourished during their ministry.

Today, as Mennonite Mission Network's prayer network facilitator, Marietta coordinates a prayer ministry that nourishes mission workers across the globe.

Praises and concerns from global mission workers are sent to more than 400 individuals or groups—plus hundreds of Mission Network staff members, board members and mission workers—who commit to praying either daily or weekly for Mission Network programs and ministry. Additionally, more than 600 churches receive the monthly Prayer Vine—a prayer request or praise for each day of the month.

Each partner collects news from around the world, four pages of excerpts from mission workers' prayer letters; those with email receive urgent prayer requests as needs arise.

Marietta says anyone can become involved in the prayer ministry. "It does not require eloquence of words but rather a humble heart to pray for God's working and others' needs," she says. "Through prayer, we partner with God and God's work moves forward."

For more information about prayer partners, visit www.mennonitemission.net/Stewardship/Prayer/.—*Ryan Miller, Mennonite Mission Network*

While Dartey communicates most with the Hursts, he often contacts other mission workers.

"Edward has been an enthusiastic prayer partner, sometimes following up with personal notes to mission workers who have been mentioned in the urgent email requests," says Marietta Sawatzky, prayer network facilitator.

Cliff and Natasha Dueck, mission workers in the Ukraine, received a note from Dartey after the birth of their second child.

"[We were] surprised he was concerned and loved us enough to write, knowing us only through conference literature, which I myself often don't have time to read," Cliff Dueck says.

Dartey started writing to the Hursts and other missionaries because he "wanted to be strengthened and share and know what is going on in others to build the Lord's ministry."

When Dartey grew up and learned there were countries besides those in Africa and ministries going on in those countries, he was eager to hear how other Christians shared the gospel. Dartey wanted to learn about North American-style ministry as well as share what he knew. His interest in the strategies of the earliest white missionaries in Africa was one reason he wrote to the Hursts, natives of North America.

Lately, however, Dartey has not been able to afford emailing missionaries as much as he would like. Though his true work is as a youth pastor and preacher, these jobs do not keep the lights on. He worked trucking water to neighboring towns and villages until he lost that job several months ago. Now he looks for odd jobs laying concrete to support his wife and daughter.

Despite financial setbacks, Dartey finds comfort in the Bible. His commitment to ministry, both locally and abroad, remains strong.

"It is not difficult to encourage others when I am struggling," Dartey says. "Daniel was in the lions' den praying for a return to Israel. … Jesus struggled but died for us to gain salvation."

Looking beyond his current struggles, Dartey dreams of attending university to study mission. For now, though, his mission is to collect enough money to buy drums for his church, a purchase he hopes will draw more young people, and to continue building relationships with Christians in Ghana and around the world.

"[These relationships] reflect that we do indeed live in a 'global village' and can share our gifts with one another across international lines," says Sawatzky.

Dartey sums up ministry in a few words: "This is not a one-man show. We all need to put our shoulders together."

Laura Kraybill is a writer for Mennonite Mission Network.

The Wallenda* factor

by Richard Spilman

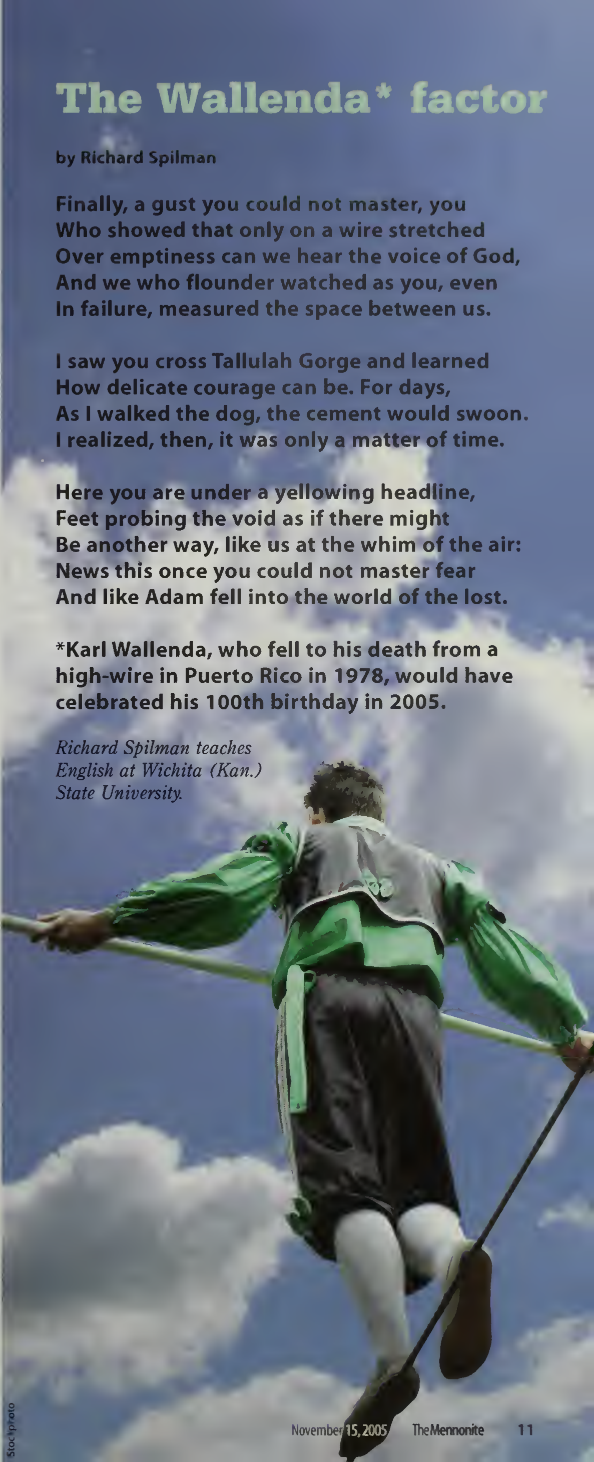
Finally, a gust you could not master, you
Who showed that only on a wire stretched
Over emptiness can we hear the voice of God,
And we who flounder watched as you, even
In failure, measured the space between us.

I saw you cross Tallulah Gorge and learned
How delicate courage can be. For days,
As I walked the dog, the cement would swoon.
I realized, then, it was only a matter of time.

Here you are under a yellowing headline,
Feet probing the void as if there might
Be another way, like us at the whim of the air:
News this once you could not master fear
And like Adam fell into the world of the lost.

***Karl Wallenda, who fell to his death from a high-wire in Puerto Rico in 1978, would have celebrated his 100th birthday in 2005.**

Richard Spilman teaches English at Wichita (Kan.) State University.



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The face of poverty

Recognizing the abundance we have can help us be grateful and share with others.

by Nancy Frey

Poverty walked on to our porch this afternoon in the person of a rail-thin man wearing old clothes, rumpled and torn but clean. He came to tell us his 8-year-old daughter died a few hours earlier.

This daughter, his only child, had been in the university hospital for nearly a month. The three bottles of serum that dripped into the girl's veins each day cost the man every cent he had. When his money was gone, his church helped him pay for treatment.

Now the man needs to figure out what to do with his daughter's body. He doesn't have any more money. He negotiated with a taxi driver to drive him and his precious, cloth-covered cargo to another town, where he has family. There the burial can take place without any ceremony. But he needs $10 for the taxi. His pastor can't help him anymore. Could we help him out?

There it is in front of us. We can't close our eyes or will it away. Children die. Too often.

Most of the time it wouldn't have to happen—if the children had clean water, good nutrition, a mosquito net to sleep under, decent primary health care. These are not complicated or expensive medical technologies, just the minimum needed to ensure survival in Cotonou, Benin.

Some 4 million children under the age of 5 die in Africa each year, two-thirds of them from illnesses that cost little to treat.

Our common interest: Tony Blair, Prime Minister of England, commissioned a study on Africa that reports: "There is a tsunami every month in Africa. But its deadly tide of disease and hunger steals silently and secretly across the continent. It is not dramatic and rarely makes the television news. Its victims die quietly, out of sight, hidden in their pitiful homes. But they perish in the same numbers."

According to the Commission on Africa's report, some 4 million children under the age of 5 die in Africa each year, two-thirds of them from illnesses that cost little to treat. Yet hunger is a key factor in more deaths than all the continent's infectious diseases put together. Meanwhile, rich nations in our world spend almost $1 billion a day subsidizing the production of unwanted food.

The naked truth: These statistics are too large for our minds to grasp. Yet it comes down to this scene—a man crying and trying to figure out how he's going to hold himself together enough to take his child and bury her.

My children ask me why he is crying. How can I explain to them what I barely understand myself? That in this world there are people who are privileged and others who are not. That where you are born determines in large part your chance of survival. That most people live blissfully ignorant of this reality.

But today I cannot ignore this truth. I looked into the face of poverty and saw a human face looking back at me.

Hope: Blair's Africa report speaks of hope, African resiliency and a pervasive interdependence. Rich nations have a chance to play a role in changing the tide of death when a small investment makes a big difference.

A business loan of $50 enables an African woman to generate income to feed her children better and send them to school. Simple lessons in basic hygiene or teaching about how to treat diarrhea with rehydration fluids (a mixture of water, salt and sugar) can save lives. Garbage collection and proper storage of dangerous waste makes the community a safer place to live. Monthly baby weigh-ins accompanied by instruction on the importance of breast-feeding can increase a child's chance of survival. These are just some of the areas where Mennonite Mission Network representatives in Benin have invested personnel and funds over the past two decades.

Hope also springs from our Christian faith. In Benin, physical health and spiritual health cannot be separated. Illness is a spiritual issue. A strong Christian faith is important in people's ability to accept change, a necessary component in adopting a healthier lifestyle.

Christians dare to defy traditions that make a common source of much-needed protein a dietary taboo. Belief in the power of Jesus enables people to look beyond curses to other possible causes of disease and opens the possibility of seeking help in medical clinics.

If we recognize God's blessings, we may be less dissatisfied with what we have and instead be filled with gratitude and joy.

Steve Wiebe Johnson

Two men praise and worship at a Ghanaian conference honoring Menno Simons.

Gratitude: "And be thankful" (Colossians 3:15b). If this discussion of poverty makes you feel guilty or uncomfortable, here are thoughts written by a mission intern, Janessa Otto, on her blog: "I also miss a lot of the way I got to live in Canada, so unbelievably privileged, but it's strange. Maybe I will get to the point of feeling guilt, but right now it's more just gratitude. We live blessed lives and should not forget it."

Rather than guilt we should feel gratitude. We don't deserve to be among the most privileged people in the world; we didn't earn that right by our own efforts (much as we like to think we did). Too many factors are beyond our control.

When we are grateful to God for what we have, we acknowledge the true source of our well-being. Perhaps our gratitude will make us more humble and willing to share? It will certainly place us in a better position with our Creator.

God's provision is like a bunch of bananas: We have a banana tree in our garden that we didn't plant, and we do not tend it much. Nevertheless, every once in a while it provides us with a big bunch of delicious bananas that all ripen at the same moment. We either have to share with others or watch them rot before we can eat them all. I tell my children God provides us with an abundance of delicious fruit to eat even though we don't furnish any effort. God's loving provision is often like that.

Think about where you find God's loving provision in your life. It could be a fruit tree that faithfully bears fruit year after year. Or it could be something less tangible: an abundance of encouraging words; an abundance of friends; an abundance of hope; an abundance of prayers; an abundance of technical expertise; an abundance of time; an abundance of work.

If we recognize God's blessings, we may be less dissatisfied with what we have and instead be filled with gratitude and joy. If we trust in God's loving provision, we will be freed from anxiety about tomorrow. We will find peace.

Abundant living like a quilt: A 9-year-old girl requested gifts of money for La Casa Grande, an orphanage in Benin, on her last birthday. As the day of her birthday approached, she wavered. She even cried a little at the thought of not opening any gifts.

This child has understood abundant living. She knows she has an abundance of blessings in her life and an abundance of people who will give her gifts. So she has chosen to share that abundance with others.

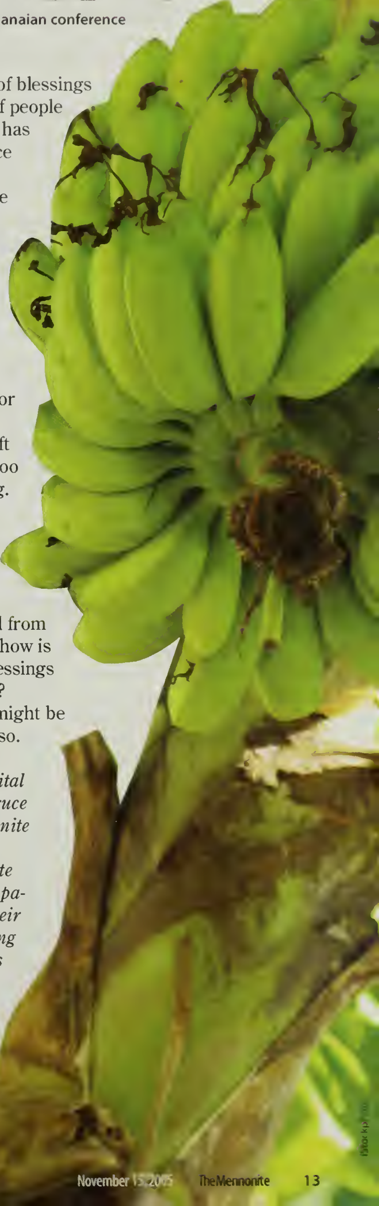
Abundance doesn't mean we have more than other people, but it does mean we have more than we need. When we have an abundance of something in our lives, we should know that it comes from God.

Quilts are an example of abundance. In an earlier time, women sewed all the clothes for their household. The many scraps of material that were left over had no value; they were too small to be made into anything. Yet when these "useless" scraps were sewn together, something beautiful and serviceable was created.

For those places where your cup runs over, praise God from whom all blessings flow. Now, how is God calling you to let those blessings flow out from you to the world?

We are blessed so that we might be a source of blessing. Let it be so.

Based in Benin's economic capital of Cotonou, Nancy Frey and Bruce Yoder, her husband, are Mennonite representatives of Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness accompanying partner institutions in their respective ministries and relating to more than 60 denominations of the African-Initiated Churches movement. Frey shares in both administration and teaching with Beninese personnel at the Benin Bible Institute. The couple has lived in Benin since 1999.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28 years in youth ministry

Merv and Jan Stoltzfus 'identify with people who don't have perfect lives.'

by Laurie Oswald Robinson

As a 19-year-old, Merv Stoltzfus, conference minister for Atlantic Coast Conference, thought he'd make fine furniture for a living. But like the discovery of many youth he's served in the last 28 years, God often has other plans.

God veered him toward college and opened doors into youth ministry. And ever since then, Merv, of Gordonville, Pa., has served with Jan, his wife, as some of the longest running youth ministers in Mennonite Church USA. Merv's roles have included being a volunteer youth worker, youth pastor, conference minister with a youth focus and a member of the Youth Ministry Leadership Team, which guides and resources youth ministry in the denomination.

Jan worked at other full-time jobs and joined Merv as a volunteer in youth ministry. They raised their only child, Karen, and seven foster children, and related to youth of all ages in the wider church family. In all these experiences, they say the qualities needed for the making of fine furniture are similar to those of forming young lives.

Many denominations relegate youth ministry to parachurch organizations. But Merv and this team work hard to keep it central to congregational life. —Keith Harder

"Youth ministry is having the privilege of shaping a young person's life, just as Merv shapes a piece of wood when making fine furniture," Jan says.

Merv says, "It's amazing to watch how God shapes a young person into someone beautiful. That's what I love most about youth ministry: seeing how people discover their gifts and take risks in using them."

Jan and Merv are risk takers. Merv's first risk came after he graduated from vocational-technical high school. He had prepared to build fine furniture. But shortly before they were married, Merv responded to an altar call at a worship service, and he sensed God calling in another direction.

"During the prayer, I sensed a small voice saying, Merv, you need to go to college," Merv says. "My first thought was, You have the wrong person, God. I have plans to build fine furniture. My next thoughts were: What will my family think? What will Jan think? But it was so compelling, I knew I had to follow that voice, even though I had no idea what was to come."

What came was the oft-unpredictable process of nurturing young lives. During that journey, the Stoltzfuses learned to cling to God's grace during hairpin curves and detours.

"I used to be frustrated when young people didn't get what I was trying to teach them," Merv says. "But now I see it's not my job to 'save' kids. That's God's job. The best I can do is show up and share faith and be Jesus to them."

Relating to foster kids helped Merv develop more patience and understanding, he says. Nurturing them brought a turning point in his ministry.

"All of them came from unchurched families," he says. "We had to talk about faith without all the clichés. We struggled with knowing how to make faith real. … I became more patient when I realized that this faith building stuff takes a long time.

"It's all about letting go of false expectations and valuing growth instead. It's not about having kids look right and act right or mimicking a leader. It's about giving them room to question and helping them to have their own faith."

Time, too, has been a big factor for Jan's growth. A shy child, she understands withdrawn youth and has developed a flair for teaching Sunday school.

Jan worked as an administrative assistant at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., and now at Graber's Scale & Calibration. She also ran a day care at home for five years and helped raise troubled foster children. She and Merv are now grandparents to Brendan, the son of Karen and their son-in-law, Mark Good.

Life's experiences have made their ministry style more real, Jan says. Merv has a physical handicap that sometimes slows him down. Jan suffered from some painful growing-up years. Along with the challenges of foster children, Karen endured a crisis in high school after she was involved in a car accident that killed an Amish man and seriously injured close friends.

"I think all this has helped us be more real and identify with people who don't have perfect lives and don't always walk a perfect path," she says. "We know from personal experience the journey is often messy."

Merv and Jan didn't always have the maturity that is so much a part of their ministry today. Like all young married couples, they had a lot to learn when they got married in 1976, they say. But also like most young people, they had plenty of energy.

Everett J. Thomas

Following a call: Merv Stoltzfus gives a sermon during the joint worship service for adult and youth convention participants in Charlotte, N.C., on July 6.

Merv's first role was at a small church plant, Dillsburg (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church. He and Jan became volunteer youth workers there in 1977 on the day of their first wedding anniversary and continued for five years. During that time, Merv attended school full-time at Messiah College. Two and a half years into the marriage, Karen was born, and life was full.

Ironically, Merv says, he never felt he'd be in youth ministry for life. Yet time after time, people invited him into youth ministry positions, and he accepted them.

After graduation he served as a social worker in Harrisburg and continued to volunteer at Dillsburg. Then his childhood congregation, Ridgeview Mennonite Church in Gordonville, Pa., invited him to take a position as part-time youth pastor.

He and Jan left the tiny church plant to serve in the large, well-established congregation from 1981 to 1987, both as a part- and full-time youth pastor. For two of those years, he also worked as a part-time youth minister for Atlantic Coast Conference.

The leap of faith in moving from Dillsburg with its 15 youth to Ridgeview with its 45 youth resulted in a learning curve and much growth, Merv says.

"Volunteers tend to do no wrong, but as a paid staff person, there are days when you feel you can do nothing right," he says.

"After three years of doing cabinetry and car sales, I felt this kind of work wasn't enough. I kept feeling like there was something more," he says.

That something more turned out to be more of the same: youth ministry. Atlantic Coast Conference called him to consider becoming its youth minister at the end of 1991, and he accepted the position.

"I felt so happy to be back in youth ministry again, and it felt like a lot of things fell together in a good way," Merv says. "I had learned a lot about working with volunteers and staff and also about the different kinds of programming and relating needed for different age groups."

Merv is still taking new assignments. One includes becoming part of a recently formed Youth Ministry Leadership Team for Mennonite Church USA. The team helps the denomination's Executive Leadership provide resources, discernment and guidance for youth ministry in the denomination's 21 area conferences.

Volunteers tend to do no wrong, but as a paid staff person, there are days when you feel you can do nothing right. —Merv Stoltzfus

Keith Harder, director of the Ministerial and Congregational Leadership Team charged with spearheading the development of a culture of calling new leaders, says he appreciates Merv's historical perspective. "He's been at this long enough to see that many fads come and go, but he knows that some things never change," Keith says. "Merv really loves the church and is committed to keeping youth ministry lodged in the congregation. Many denominations relegate youth ministry to parachurch organizations. But Merv and this team work hard to keep it central to congregational life."

Merv says, "Youth ministry should not be a separate entity of the church, but we should embrace it as central to church life. We are learning that young people must choose faith for themselves. And in order for them to do that, we need to invite them to use their gifts today and not wait for some distant tomorrow.

"We need to show them we love them and value them, and not only when they are perfect or do what we want. We need to show them that as adults we fail, too. In God's eyes, it's following a call, not performing, that counts."

Laurie Oswald Robinson, editor of Timbrel, *the publication of Mennonite Women USA, wrote this story for Mennonite Church USA News Service.*

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Church people should

Churches and conferences need to work harder at building unanimity in decision making.

Many Mennonite churches use rules of procedure in conducting their business meetings, as indeed they must if they are incorporated, but often these procedures are violated either unwittingly or unintentionally. Also, chairpersons forget they are facilitators, helping members make decisions. And sometimes members are disrespectful of each other, for they do not revere fellow members' humanity.

The meeting of four Great Lakes Mennonite conferences on Oct. 13, 2001 (see "Bigger Not Better," Oct. 23, 2001), is a glaring example of such incorrect procedures and disrespect.

First, according to the minutes of the meeting, Dale Shank, moderator of the Indiana-Michigan Conference, announced that amendments to the motion to merge the four conferences would not be accepted. Regardless of who made the decision, such a decision belongs to the delegates. A serious violation of procedures.

Second, evidently no roll call of delegates by conferences was taken, as the minutes of the meeting show none. The only public record of number of delegates was published by *Mennonite Weekly Review* (Oct. 18, 2001). This periodical recorded that more than 600 delegates attended the meeting. We do not know the total number of delegates entitled by each conference and so are unable to determine the number who failed to carry out their church's assignment.

Third, the minutes state that the "proposal for the Great Lakes Mennonite Conference was defeated because it did not pass by a two-thirds vote in all four conferences." Again some person or committee took an important decision from the delegates. There is also a problem with the two-thirds vote, which I will consider later.

Fourth, absentee votes in this meeting violated the spirit of the meeting. In a telephone conversation with Allen Rutter, then moderator of the Ohio Conference, I learned that Ohio was entitled to 415 delegates but that only 248 voted, including 68 absentee ballots. According to moderator Rutter, 135 Ohio delegates voted yes and 113 voted no, thereby failing to achieve the required two-thirds vote.

The Ohio Conference's 68 absentee votes present a serious problem. For those 68 absentees, more than one-half of Ohio's no voters, trivialized the mutual counsel and prayers asking for the Spirit's guidance in making this important decision. The 68 absentee voters intentionally chose to avoid the counsel of fellow delegates and the prompting of the Spirit present in the meeting. Thus 113 votes, 68 of which were absentee votes, denied the wishes of approximately 500 delegates to place four conferences under one organization. This is egregious.

Thus 113 votes, 68 of which were absentee votes, denied the wishes of approximately 500 delegates to place four conferences under one organization. This is egregious.

If you think this example of two-thirds voting is an exception, here are additional examples: *The Mennonite*, July 16, 2002, recorded that a two-thirds vote resulted in the failure of a motion that would have created a new category for “congregations at variance with the denominational position” of the Western District Conference. Also, *Mennonite Weekly Review*, July 28, 2003, reported that the Evangelical Mennonite Church delegates failed to support a motion to drop the name Mennonite, which required a 75 percent vote to pass, having received only 72 percent.

As a professional parliamentarian for many years, I find such violations pervasive.

Now to the problem of the two-thirds or three-fourths vote. With the two-thirds and three-fourths votes the members have agreed that if a motion is lost it is acceptable to have the value of the yes vote significantly reduced. This should be unacceptable to church members.

Probably the reason for the two-thirds required vote is to ensure substantial support for a course of action. But that is a bad reason. There are correct ways to proceed in such circumstances. Support of a motion is gained by all members clearly understanding it, and by recognizing the benefits it would achieve, not be a threat of losing vote value.

Another correct procedure is when a motion requiring a majority vote receives the support of only 55 or 60 percent of the members, a member should move to reconsider the motion just carried sometime during the meeting in session. Then the members, having seen the relative weak support, may choose to vote no the second time around.

A second way to determine the support for a motion before a vote is to have a recess to caucus in small groups or as an entire group. (Taking straw votes when the meeting is in session is a violation of business meeting rules, as it leads to confusion for members as to when a vote is for real or only a test.) If this support for the motion is only slightly by a majority, a vote should not be taken in a church meeting. This is a time for more discussion and adjustment by amendments in order to achieve a high degree of unanimity.

Members who resist change, however, will push for a two-thirds vote, as it is to their advantage in defeating a motion proposing a change, for the one-third (35 percent), will have more voting power than the two-thirds (65 percent) group.

More substantive motions, by their very nature, propose a course of action, a change in policy; otherwise there is no need for a motion. So it is always a temptation for the resisters to change to want a two-thirds or a three-fourths vote in order to maintain the status quo.

I am not promoting bare majority votes for substantive motions, though majority is the only vote that is respectful of all members. Instead I am denouncing all percentage votes as undesirable for use in church business meetings.

Permit me an example of a congregation that achieved a high degree of unanimity while providing votes of equal value for all members. This congregation’s constitution states that all substantive motions “shall require a majority vote for passage,” thereby assuring that all members’ votes will be equal. And they do not bring a motion to a vote until a large majority is in support of the motion. In the early 1990s this church launched a remodeling program by placing on the table a members’ wish list of desired changes and additions: enlarged fellowship hall and new kitchen, additional office space, organ moved from the front of the auditorium to the back, sloping auditorium floor and additional space for classrooms. After meetings that covered more than two years, during which the congregation divided itself into groups of eight to 10 members to provide for total participation in understanding costs and benefits of the various projects, and having small groups report on their positions regarding each project (a type of caucus), a motion was finally phrased that best reflected a strong majority’s position on the remodeling program. This motion passed by well over a 90 percent vote. The motion did not, however, include moving the organ and the construction of sloping floor for the auditorium, projects that a large majority believed had to be set aside because of cost.

To achieve this unanimity took a long time, something many church and conference meetings do not provide but should, as well as adjustments by amendments as directed by feedback from the caucus reports. Mennonite congregations should try for this type of decision making.

Al Albrecht is a member of College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.

If support for a motion is only slightly by a majority, a vote should not be taken in a church meeting.

do better

by Al Albrecht

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Jesus sends us into the fields

Stanley Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network.

At Nashville 2001, the newly forming Mennonite Church USA committed itself to a missional vision as our defining identity. Since then, a Missional Church Team has at each of its meetings engaged in a discipline called "Dwelling in the Word." For four years we have dwelt in the same passage of Scripture (Luke 10:1-12) and still hear fresh words from the Lord. Here is what I believe God is saying to Mennonite Church USA on this journey toward becoming more missional.

Jesus' action in sending the 70 and his injunction to the disciples to announce the coming of the kingdom of God remind us that while we may have an agenda in our church, God has a purpose for the world. This exchange between Jesus and the 70 makes clear that at the heart of God's purpose is reaching those on the outside (in the "fields") with the message of peace and reconciliation, healing and hope, the blessing of God's kingdom, which has come near. Jesus calls his servants to partnership in inviting people to enter that kingdom.

> We have built such security into our lives that it is difficult to allow ourselves to risk vulnerability and dependence.

This passage confirms that God's purposes require that some be willing to be sent. Jesus' reflection on the potential waste in the unharvested fields makes it clear that God desires servants who see themselves as sent ones. The purposes of God call for a church ready to move out of merely managing the grain silo to harvesting the fields. God's purposes call us to be willing to move from a posture of preservation to one of engagement, from a separation from the world to engagement, aligned with what God is doing in the world.

I am awed also by the confidence Jesus puts in the sent ones. He sends them where he intended to go. He is not afraid they will mess up. Mennonites sometimes feel we have to be perfect. We don't allow ourselves much grace—and do not offer it to others. This may explain why we are afraid to take risks. This text invites us in our congregational contexts and our personal contacts to step out in obedience to Jesus rather than being constrained by fear of failure.

Jesus commands his followers to take no purse, bag or sandals on the journey. This may sound scary. Mennonites have grown more affluent in recent decades. We know less and less what it means to be vulnerable, to depend on others. This passage calls the followers of Jesus to vulnerability. We are so used to taking gifts or to the promise of resources when we go in mission that when we hear the instructions of Jesus, we cannot believe he meant them. We have built such security into our lives that it is difficult to allow ourselves to risk vulnerability and dependence. It seems Jesus is calling us to risk learning anew what it means to trust God for our security and our provision. This passage rebukes a growing tendency among us to believe it is solely financial resources we need to accomplish the work of the Lord. I hear God calling us to a conversion from our independence and self-sufficiency to reliance and trust in God's provision and the Spirit's equipping for our task.

Jesus commands the sent ones to cure the sick and preach the gospel. We need to respond to the suffering and hurts in the human family. However, we also need to preach the good news of God's reign. The disciples are commanded to heal and point people to the kingdom. Jesus calls us to a holistic ministry of word and deed that is transformational. Jesus calls us not just to bring our presence or our good works of compassion and caring but to announce the transforming power of God's kingdom through word and deed.

Among the many more words from the Lord in this passage is one I believe Mennonites need to hear. Jesus calls the disciples to prayer for the fulfillment of God's purposes. We sometimes become too focused on our capacities and too limited by our resources. For Jesus, the mission begins in prayer. It is central and crucial to God's call. As Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., puts it, "The transformational journey is a spiritual one that begins with me."

We will understand more fully the purposes of God if we make space for God in our lives through prayer. We will also more clearly understand our place in those purposes. We will see the world as God sees it and be given a passion to make that vision a reality.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Citizens of the kingdom**—John Paul Lederach
- **A holy nation**—Ernest Martin
- **Passing on the pacifism**—Katie Immel

Hesston College

Larry Bartel

Keim family members and former Hesston College presidents surround Howard Keim and his wife Tami as Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary president Nelson Kraybill offers a prayer of dedication Oct. 29.

Hesston College inaugurates Keim

Eighth president to lead college 'known for its closeness to the church'

A Hesston (Kan.) College graduate who is internationally recognized for his experience in conciliation and mediation called those attending the inauguration of Hesston College's new president to be vulnerable, to be love and to be humble. John Paul Lederach, professor of international peacebuilding at the Joan Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame spoke on "Finding That of God" at the Oct. 29 ceremony.

Norm Yoder and Rosalind Andreas presided over the inauguration of Howard Keim as the eighth president of Hesston College. Yoder, from Henderson, Neb., chairs the Hesston College board of overseers and was chair of the presidential search committee. Andreas, from Essex Junction, Vt., chairs the board of directors for Mennonite Education Agency (MEA), based in Goshen, Ind.

"May your life be guided by the Holy Spirit, by the Word of God and by the counsel of the church," she said as she installed Keim. "May God's blessing be upon you, your family and this college."

Following a prayer of dedication by Nelson Kraybill, president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Keim responded.

"I am honored today by the trust placed in me by MEA and the Hesston College Board of Overseers," Keim said. "I will do my best to be a good steward of your trust in the years ahead. Hesston College was founded in 1909 on the conviction that there should be a Mennonite college in the West, that it should be a place of Christian nurture and that it should prepare students in all types of vocations around the world.

"Today we celebrate the visionary leadership of the boards, presidents, faculty and staff who have come before us. The legacy passed on to us is strong. We have inherited an institution that is known for its closeness to the church and for its sense of community and its academic excellence."

But Keim also pointed to challenges ahead.

"The country we live in is polarized," he said. "Our culture is seductive, luring us away from the call of Christ with pleasure and affluence. Many in the world have not heard or responded to the gospel.

"State and federal dollars for student aid are shrinking, while the costs of education are rising. In this time and in this place, Hesston College is needed more than ever. We must take the faith, the hope and the love of those who came before us and honor it with our own. We must not only teach the Bible but introduce students to Jesus himself."

Leading the recessional following the inauguration service were 10 students carrying a multicolor prayer cloth on which many people had written prayers and words of affirmation and encouragement for Keim and the college.

The Saturday evening gala featured an amazing variety of fine arts. To honor Keim, alumni and friends performed gospel music, country blues, excerpts from musicals, spirituals, bluegrass and a barbershop quartet, mixed with humor, poetry, dance, clogging and dramatic monologues (by Keim himself).—*Phil Richard of Hesston College*

We must not only teach the Bible but introduce students to Jesus himself.
—Howard Keim

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Guatemalan leader loses family members

Mud slides from Oct. 5 hurricane wipe out 500 people in mountain village.

When hurricane winds and rain caused mud slides in the mountains of Guatemala on Oct. 5, most of the 500 people in the village of San Pedro San Marcos disappeared.

Doña Eudelia lost almost all her relatives in San Marcos. They were buried by the mud. Other relatives who survived were left without a house, without food.

"Today we witnessed and shared a partner's pain. Doña Eudelia is maybe one of the humblest sisters in SEMILLA, but a great champion of the faith," wrote Mario Higueros of Guatemala, a former dean at SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist seminary, in early October.

Many people in small villages, excluded by society, built their houses in the only places left for the poor. Their homes were in areas of risk. The mud slides left them without belongings, without homes. But it was the irreparable loss of relatives that left them heartbroken.

"You can replace everything little by little," says Doña Eudelia, "although that may take many years. But what we will no longer have is the life of our relatives."

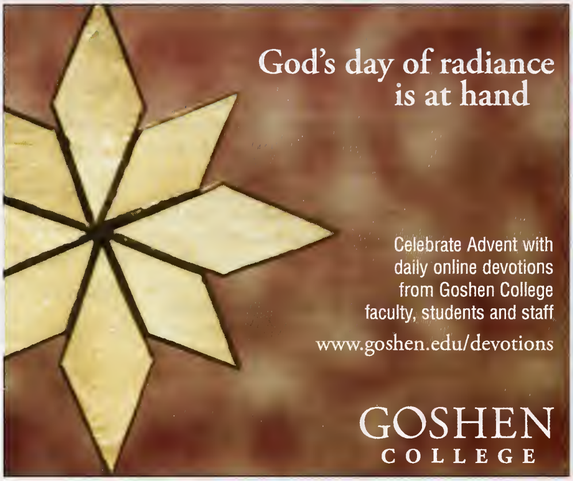
When the storm swept across Central America, it devastated 319 communities in the San Marcos region of Guatemala, leaving at least 284 dead, 133 disappeared and 5,449 homes destroyed. Nearly 75,000 people lost their belongings.

More than 15,000 were given refuge. Some survivors in devastated areas received outside help after the storm as well as a visit from Doña Sofía, Queen of Spain.

Higueros plans to offer courses to help people deal with their traumatic experience, but it will not be possible to do so for some time, as the highways are in bad shape, he said.

Samuel Martínez Leal, president of the Iglesia Evangélica Menonita de El Salvador, wrote that members of the Mennonite Church in El Salvador were not affected directly by the hurricane although the country suffered great damage.

Felix Rafael Curbelo, pastor of the Brethren in Christ Mission Society in Cuba, reported that the hurricane affected scores of people located along many kilometers of sea coast in La Habana, the city's capital.—*Mennonite World Conference release from reports by Milka Rindzinsky, Uruguay*



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Pastor's sabbatical sparks rejuvenation

Lilly-funded renewal program sends Kansas pastor to Khayelitsha, South Africa.

Cleo Koop would not have walked through the neighborhood alone, not in the darkness. On either side of him, sounds from the half-dozen residents within each cardboard and tin shack filled the night. He had heard stories of the crime among the shanties of Khayelitsha, South Africa, and he was the only light-skinned person in sight.

Koop would have been lost, helpless, perhaps even panicked, but for the man who strode confidently ahead of him. Moses, an off-duty police officer, led the way through the shacks to their final destination: a service of mourning and prayer.

Koop, pastor of First Mennonite Church in Halstead, Kan., spent a month of his sabbatical in South Africa through Mennonite Mission Network, thanks to a National Clergy Renewal Program Grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc.

"If you really want to change your church," Koop says, "send your pastor to a cross-cultural experience."

Koop returns with an understanding of how South Africans lead and how they develop new leaders. Moses' actions that night, he says, reflect the leadership each congregation needs.

"Leadership means to blaze the trail or be a step ahead or know a way to lead someone less versed in the culture," Koop says. "Moses had confidence to lead me through because he thought it was important for me to experience this [service]."

Koop is one of a growing group of pastors seeking out those experiences as part of the growth and rejuvenation inherent in a sabbatical.

Deb Byler, Mission Network international personnel counselor, says pastors can simply learn by walking alongside workers.

This process aids the workers as well. Brian Dyck, who hosted Koop in South Africa with his wife, Lynell Bergen, says Koop offered a new perspective for them while passing on North American news.

"It was good to have a pastor we could talk to about our work," Dyck says. "Even with the Internet we can feel out of touch without a real person to talk to from time to time."

Brian Dyck

From left: presiding elder Francis Matsetse, Bishop Molise and Cleo Koop.

South African pastors and mission workers, Koop says, were pushing discipleship, preparing young lay leaders and setting them free.

"In my local congregation, I want to be more intentional in developing that," Koop says.

"I want to allow them to make more decisions, be on the sideline empowering them … and not coming in with the answers."—*Ann Graham Price and Ryan Miller of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Shenk

For Jason Shenk, discipleship is about asking questions and finding solutions that will help him—and others—follow Jesus. As a peace and global studies major and third-year student at Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., Jason is taking the values and beliefs he learned growing up at Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., and finding ways to answer the question, What does it mean to pursue peace and justice in our daily lives?

For Shenk, the answer includes not registering with the U.S. Selective Service System, learning about relationships between Mennonites and Muslims, and perhaps a career with a not-for-profit or church organization when he graduates.

"My decision not to register is tied to the idea of discipleship—that in following Jesus, our actions matter and should be consistent with our beliefs," Shenk says.

Shenk is not eligible to receive government grants and loans for college because he is a nonregistrant. However, as an attendee of a Mennonite Church USA congregation, he can receive funds from the Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants.

The Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants is a special nonbudget fund administered by Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership. It was created by the former Mennonite Church (MC) in 1983 to replace potential government grants and loans lost by students who for reasons of Christian conscience choose not to register with the Selective Service System.

Although the money Shenk receives from the fund covers only grants and loans he lost because of his nonregistration, Shenk says they've given him the chance to pursue learning experiences he otherwise would not have had. Instead of working at a seasonal job to pay for college last summer, Shenk was able to work as an intern at the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). There he was able to explore a newly developed curiosity about the connections between Muslims and Mennonites.

The fascination evolved from a peace and global studies course taught by an Earlham professor and Islamic scholar from Lebanon.

"Coming from a Mennonite tradition," Shenk says, "my natural reaction was to compare what I was learning in the class with what I knew from my Mennonite experiences. When I started thinking about my final research project for the class, I was interested in what relationships or interactions existed between peace-oriented churches and Muslims. But I couldn't find much written about the domestic context of these groups."

Shenk's research and experience as an intern at ISNA have become a valuable resource for Mennonite Church USA. He is working with peace advocate for Mennonite Church USA Susan Mark Landis to write a booklet—spurred by the denomination's recent statement on the war in Iraq—about what it means to "reach out in friendship to local Muslims."

As for the next big experience in his life, Shenk will take a break from "hollering at sporting events" and biking around Earlham to spend a semester in Jordan, where he hopes to improve his Arabic and learn about working for economic development with the people and organizations of the developing world.—*Marathana Prothro of Mennonite Church USA*

Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants

Established in 1983, the Student Aid Fund for Nonregistrants continues to support students who choose not to register with the U.S. Selective Service System. In 2005, $23,000 worth of loans were distributed to four men, and $5,900 in grants were distributed to three men.

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Aid workers and military cannot mix

Sudan worker asks why groups try to fix problems instead of underlying issues.

Should the military do humanitarian work in conflict situations? The answer is no, according to representatives from aid groups gathered for Guns, Food and Medicine, an Oct. 13 forum sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and Menno Simons College in Winnipeg.

"In Iraq, it's hard to tell who is with the military, an aid group or private contractor," Mennonite Central Committee worker Peter Dula told the audience of about 200 at the event. According to Dula, when the U.S. military sought to involve aid groups, it ended up endangering "everyone who does humanitarian work—aid workers become legitimate targets."

Tony Parmar, program director for Médicins sans frontières (MSF) Canada told the forum that aid groups have always had to deal with conflict situations. What has changed, however, is "now our countries of origin are taking part in these wars. It is getting harder to show that we don't carry the same goals as the Canadian military."

He noted that during the war in Afghanistan, then U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to humanitarian groups as "force multipliers" and as "part of the combat team" in that country. "We don't want to be seen as part of integrated response," Parmar said.

"In Iraq, journalists were embedded with troops," Dula added. "The coalition tried to do the same with humanitarian groups. That endangers us and sucks humanitarian groups into military projects in ways that are unhealthy."

Since being seen as neutral is key to MSF's work, "it is imperative to keep the military and humanitarian work distinct, not to be perceived as part of the military," he said.

But James Oporia Ekwaro, who works with Sudan Focal Point, an ecumenical effort to address the war and current humanitarian crises in Sudan, asserted that the debate between military and aid groups about their roles typifies the Western approach to issues in the developing world. He wondered why any external group—military or humanitarian—felt it was their responsibility to fix things in other countries. "There's lots of money for aid but not for development," he said, calling on North Americans to focus on underlying issues that created the conflicts and to empower local people to fix things in their own countries.—*John Longhurst of Canadian Mennonite University*

In Iraq, it's hard to tell who is with the military, an aid group or private contractor.
—Peter Dula

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WORKERS

Gusler, Todd, was licensed Oct. 23 as youth pastor at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind.

Mellinger, James, was installed Oct. 23 as pastor at Greensboro Mennonite Fellowship, Greensboro, N.C.

Williams, Angie B., was ordained for special ministry Nov. 6 at New Beginnings Church, Bridgewater, Va.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Barstow, Reeselin Marie, Oct. 20, to Jeremy and Nicole Linder Barstow, Louisville, Ohio.

Baska, Madelline Belle, Oct. 1, to Shawn and Jessica Callison Baska, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Birk, Madelyn Rae, Oct. 11, to Steve and Jaclyn Jesse Birk, Elkhart, Ind.

Burkholder, Magdalena Hertzler, Oct. 16, to Alan and Susan Hertzler Burkholder, Lakewood, Ohio.

Harder, Amos Neufeld, Oct. 29, to Willmar T. Harder and Hannah Neufeld, Inman, Kan.

Hochstetler, Brianna Morgan, Oct. 10, to Jon and Lisa Hiebert Hochstetler, Newton, Kan.

Hostetter, Ryan Darrel, Oct. 17, to Obe and Jill Hertzler Hostetter, Harrisonburg, Va.

Koontz, Abigail Lillie, Oct. 17, to Matt and Jenni Scott Koontz, Park City, Kan.

Lapp, Ashley Paige, Aug. 21, to Andrew and Michelle Hager Lapp, Telford, Pa.

Mast, Noah Anthony, Oct. 19, to Tony and Dawn King Mast, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Samantha Renee, Oct. 20, to Luke and Denise Yoder Miller, Wichita, Kan.

Riley, Mekenzie Jo, July 20, to Joel and Benita Stutzman Riley, Milford, Neb.

Roth, Joseph Craig, Oct. 4, to Kyle and Lisa Hult Roth, Lenexa, Kan.

Schmidt, Behla Marin, Oct. 8, to Joe and Carrie Yoder Schmidt, Crozet, Va.

Schrock, Nolan Matthew, July 27, to Kenny and Melissa Schrock, Arthur, Ill.

Sommers, Sawyer Allen, Oct. 17, to Scott and Kami Woodring Sommers, Hartville, Ohio.

Stutzman, Madison Dawn, July 7, to Bruce and Janel Campbell Stutzman, Milford, Neb.

Unruh, Jackson Isaiah, Oct. 17, to Nicole Unruh, Greensburg, Kan.

Unzicker, Jacob Roger, Oct. 7, to David Unzicker and Janelle Basinger, Florissant, Mo.

Waltner, Henry Michael, Oct. 12, to Matthew and Rachel Eisenbraun Waltner, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Witthoft, Madison Olivia, Oct. 4, to Brandon and Lori Miller Witthoft, Wellman, Iowa.

Yoder, Carter Richard, Oct. 20, to Doug and Amber Collins Yoder, Goshen, Ind.

Younts, Rilyn Hope, Oct. 18, to Ben and Nickie Reffett Younts, White Pigeon, Mich.

MARRIAGES

Buckler/Marner: Jenni Buckler, Arthur, Ill., and Jeff Marner, Arthur, Oct. 8 in Arthur.

Diener/Jorgensen: Obie Diener, Harrisonburg, Va., and Kari Jorgensen, Northfield, Minn., Oct. 15 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Eliot/Rhodenbaugh: Jason Eliot, Canton, Kan., and Alisha Rhodenbaugh, Inman, Kan., Oct. 8 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Ficke/Troyer: Dustin Ficke, Pleasant Dale, Neb., and Denielle Troyer, Milford, Neb., Sept. 3 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Milford.

Finn/Steffy: Kelly Finn, Reading, Pa., and Jonathan Steffy, Manheim, Pa., Oct. 15 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

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Helmuth/Kirkton: David Helmuth, Arthur, Ill., and Emmy Lou Kirkton, Gridley, Ill., Oct. 2 in Tiskilwa, Ill.

DEATHS

Bear, Beatrice Kauffman, 90, East Petersburg, Pa., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Benjamin H. Bear (deceased). Parents: Elmer N. and Anna Leaman Kauffman. Children: Irene B. Landis, Patsy B. Groff; 10 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at East Petersburg Mennonite Church.

Bixler, Glen G., 90, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 5. Spouse: Wilma Shaum Bixler (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Martha Wenger Bixler. Children: Mary Jane Roth, Glen S.; five grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 8 at Rieth Rohrer Ehret Funeral Home, Goshen.

Christner, Vernon J., 76, Lagrange, Ind., died Oct. 23. Spouse: Fannie Marie Miller Christner. Parents: John S. and Gertie M. Yoder Christner. Children: Sherryl Rhinesmith, Nedra Watson, Marsha Pineda; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Conrad, Richard, 86, Louisville, Ohio, died Oct. 18. Spouse: Mary Martin Conrad. Parents: Daniel and Anna Knopp Conrad. Children: Patricia Williams, Marilyn Schell, Deborah Pachmeyer, Diane Fulmer, James, John, William, Kenneth, Randal, Charles (deceased); 19 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Beech Mennonite Church, Louisville.

Derstine, Arlene Roth, 85, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Stuart K. Derstine. Parents: Elmer and Caroline Kemmerer Roth. Children: Nancy Greaser, Diane Detweiler, Lee, John, David; 13 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Souderton Mennonite Church.

Dyck, Abe A., 80, Buhler, Kan., died Oct. 18. Spouse: Arlene Stucky. Parents: Abraham J. and Margaret Schmidt Dyck. Children: Margaret Grossardt, David; one grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Franz, Emily Regnier, 26, Sturgis, Mich., died Oct. 22. Spouse: Matthew Paul Franz. Parents: James and Janette Regnier. Child: Cecelia. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Allen Park (Mich.) Chapel.

Gochenaur, Verna Irene, 89, Lancaster, Pa., died Aug. 16. Spouse: Robert H. Gochenaur, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Christian and Ada Murry Thomas. Children: Alma Shultz, Robert, Betty Rohrer; 11 grandchildren; 30 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 19 at New Providence (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Godshalk, Elsie W., 81, Chalfont, Pa., died Oct. 8. Spouse: Paul H. Godshalk. Parents: J. Paul and Barbara Wismer Rush. Children: Donna Barndt, Judith Martin-Godshalk, Lorne "Lory" Blank; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 11 at Deep Run Mennonite Church East, Perkasie, Pa.

Gerber, Lorne David, 61, Stratford, Ont., died Oct. 27. Spouse: Viola Gerber. Parents: John and Clara Bast Gerber. Children: Bob, Brad, Tammy Lynch; six grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 31 at Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford.

Kaufman, Leona, 92, Wayland, Iowa, died Sept. 30. Parents: Joseph J. and Lydia Boese Kaufman. Funeral: Oct. 3 at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church, Wayland.

Lehman, Verna Yeager, 78, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 17. Spouse: G. Irvin Lehman. Parents: Roy C. and Ada M. Shetter Yeager. Children: George N., Peter, Timothy, Eunice Kerbs; four grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 20 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

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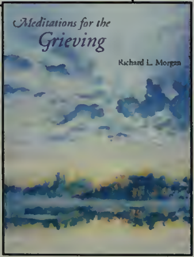

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Marek, O. Darlene, 76, Washington, Iowa, died Sept. 21. Parents: Paul and Ednabell Simpson Marek. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Jones Funeral Home, Washington.

Miller, Euphemia Allan, 89, Leicester, N.Y., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Mahlon J. Miller (deceased). Parents: William and Elizabeth Johnstone Allan. Children: Thomas A., Karen L. Myers, Sharon K. Richardson, George L.; three grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 17 at Covington United Presbyterian Church, Pavilion, N.Y.

Miller, Mary Mullet, 99, Kalona, Iowa, died Oct. 14. Spouse: Clarence Miller (deceased). Parents: Noah and Fannie Hershberger Mullet. Children: Clara Yoder, Albert, Fannie, Mamie Nisly, Ezra; 28 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Nisly, Laura, 70, Grantham, Pa., died Sept. 7 of liver cancer. Spouse: Paul W. Nisly. Parents: Edward and Elizabeth Yoder Nisly. Children: Janelle Joy (deceased), L. Lamar, Randal R.; three grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 11 at Grantham Brethren in Christ Church.

Oberlander, Doris Mae, 76, Perkasie, Pa., died Oct. 12. Spouse: Frank O. Oberlander, Sr. (deceased). Parents: Warren and Annie Charles Renner. Children: Nancy A. Cramer, Frances Nyce, Frank O. Oberlander, Jr.; 12 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 19 at Reed and Steinback Funeral Home, Doylestown, Pa.

Roth, Lulu Freyenberger, 96, Wayland, Iowa, died Oct. 14. Spouse: Lloyd Roth (deceased). Parents: Menno and Mary Oswald Freyenberger. Child: Donnie G.; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 16 at Sugar Creek Mennonite, Wayland.

Schmidt, Clara Penner, 97, Newton, Kan., died Oct. 16. Spouse: Ben Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Isaac and Margaret Nickel Penner. Children: Eldon, Elaine Miller, Delores Strahm; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Grace Hill Mennonite Church, Whitewater, Kan.

Schmidt, Linda E. Martens, 93, Inman, Kan., died Oct. 16. Spouse: Otto P. Schmidt. Parents: Peter B. and Anna Schroeder Martens. Children: Velda Braun, Leon, LeRoy, Delores Funk; 11 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 18 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman.

Seaton, Velda, 99, Washington, Iowa, died Sept. 22. Spouse: Roy Seaton (deceased). Parents: Floyd and Mabel Jones Hixson. Children: Kathleen, Karen. Funeral: Sept. 24 at Gould Funeral Home, Richland, Iowa.

Seese, Dale, 84, Johnstown, Pa., died Sept. 27. Spouse: Allegra Seese. Parents: Willis and Elizabeth Seese. Children: Althea, Alden (Doc), Adrian; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 30 at Carpenter Park Mennonite Church, Davidsville, Pa.

Springer, Eugene W., 77, Morton, Ill., died Oct. 21. Spouse: Mary Schrock Springer. Parents: Joseph and Emma Birkey Springer. Children: Jody Knepp, Patty Johnson, Jeanne Lindley, Rollie, Jeff; 21 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 24 at Calvary Mennonite Church, Washington, Ill.

Springer, Gary, 59, St. George, Utah, died Oct. 16. Spouse: Georgia Bane Springer (deceased). Parents: Paul and Leota Birkey Springer. Children: Staci, Nickolas; stepchildren: Robert Bateman, Jr., Randolph Bateman, Kimberly Duncan; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Davis Mortuary, Tremont, Ill.

Yoder, Lillie Hostetler, 106, Lebanon, Ore., died Sept. 11. Spouse: Silas Yoder (deceased). Parents: Enos and Minerva Hostetler. Children: Glenn, Lora Marshall, Dorothy King, Violet Hopkins; eight grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; 17 great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

Yoder, Stanley Jay, 82, Canby, Ore., died Oct. 6. Spouse: Carmen Wolf Yoder. Parents: Loney and Vinnie Kauffman Yoder. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Zion Mennonite Church, Hubbard, Ore.

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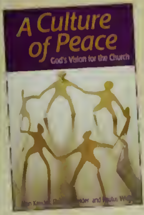
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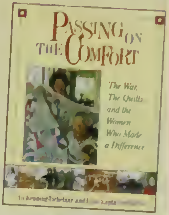
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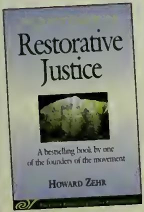
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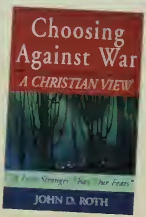
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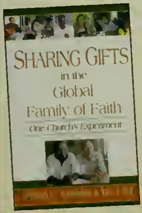
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Care for older adults is a congregational issue

Rick Stiffney

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Health-care Ethics), looks at issues of health-care ethics. For more infomation, go to www.anabaptist-ethics.org.

Sadie is 90 years old and frail. She has lived at Rolling Meadows Retirement community for the past 15 years. Her husband died 10 years ago, and she has no other family in the area. Until recently, Sadie lived in one of the community's small cottages. Sadie has been in the nursing home since breaking her hip last year.

Sadie's modest assets have been used up or "spent down" on her care; she is now on Medicaid, a government program that provides medical care for the needy, including people with disabilities, children in low-income families, the poor and certain older adults such as Sadie. Operated by the individual states, the program's funding comes from the states and the federal government. In many ways the program works well. This is our U.S. tax money doing good.

Unfortunately, Medicaid covers on average only 75 percent of the nursing home's actual costs of providing good care, and many, like Sadie, depend on Medicaid to cover their care. Indeed, approximately 60 percent of the nursing home residents at Rolling Meadows are on Medicaid. Rolling Meadows and similar institutions incur many expenses for which they do not receive adequate compensation.

> Medicaid covers on average only 75 percent of the nursing home's actual costs of providing good care.

As the number of working poor without health insurance continues to increase and as the U.S. population ages, the states and federal government are overwhelmed with the expanding demands on Medicaid budgets. Both federal and state governments are responding by restricting the growth of those budgets. The result is that payments to nursing homes and other health-care providers are falling further behind the actual cost of care.

How does Rolling Meadows provide long-term care for Sadie when she cannot pay and the Medicaid payments cover only a portion of the cost? Providers have few options. For instance, Rolling Meadows can cover this gap by charging considerably more for private-pay nursing home residents and those using other services, such as independent living. Rolling Meadows can also attempt to raise charitable support to make up the difference. Finally, Rolling Meadows can turn away others who are seeking services for which they cannot fully pay.

Sadie's story is repeated often. On a collective basis, Mennonite-affiliated retirement communities and nursing homes provide millions of dollars of care for which they are under-compensated. Sadie may be a member of your congregation. Who is responsible for the cost of Sadie's care?

This financial challenge in the area of long-term care is magnified by divestiture. This practice typically uses an estate planner to distribute the older adult's assets to family members over several years. The older adult thus becomes eligible for Medicaid more quickly. The practice is legal. Some argue that the practice is good financial planning and wise stewardship. Others argue that it abuses a system designed for the poor and places an undue burden on health-service providers and their private-pay residents. Many Mennonites have used this practice to keep treasured assets—such as property that has sentimental value—within the family. Other Mennonites have used such assets to pay for elder care.

Families across the county and throughout our churches are facing these questions. Our Mennonite-affiliated retirement communities are dealing daily with these challenges. Issues surrounding care of older adults, including the challenges of under-compensated care and divestiture, will continue to grow as our population ages.

What can we do? Congregations can

1. Investigate the needs of older adults in your congregation.
2. Contact a local faith-based retirement community. Ask them to share with you how they deal with these challenges.
3. Explore how the congregation or area conference can provide support services to allow older adults to stay in their homes.
4. Develop a Christian education series on basic dimensions/issues of aging.
5. Help the congregation and conference debate the moral implications of divestiture. When is such a practice good stewardship and when is it abusing the system?
6. Encourage your congregation and conference to explore the benefits and limitations of long-term care insurance. Do we have an obligation to purchase such insurance? What does such insurance say about the nature of the church?
7. Support Mennonite retirement ministries efforts to raise benevolent funds that cover the uninsured and help fill the gap.
8. Consider starting a congregation- or conference-based endowment to assist elder church members who lack the financial resources for appropriate care.

Mennonite Church USA

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Dr. Mark Suderman, Music Department Chair at Bluffton University, with vocalists Charity Grimes and Andrew Martz.

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Gordon Houser

The eyes of a rhino

At the root of all war is fear: not so much the fear [people] have of one another as the fear they have of everything.—Thomas Merton

We live in a world of fears: large ones, such as terrorism, disasters, bird flu, the economy or crime, and more personal ones, such as accidents, cancer, job loss or (fill in the blank). Yet Jesus says to his disciples (and to us): "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

How do we overcome the fear that wants to overwhelm us? 1 John 4:18 tells us that "perfect love casts out fear." In his essay "The Root of War Is Fear," Merton writes that "only love—which means humility—can exorcize the fear that is at the root of all war."

Love—the love of God, of one another—gives us courage to face our fears. It also helps us see the world, God's good creation, in a different light. We need not fear when we see that God's ultimate purpose will come to be.

This can seem too philosophical, too distant from our experience. Sometimes we need glimpses of goodness to give us courage.

On a beautiful day last month, Jeanne and I visited a zoo near Salina, Kan. Among the animals we saw were several rhinos. These are massive beasts, weighing 5,000-7,000 pounds. Yet these seemed playful. One speared a pumpkin tossed in by a worker, then flung it to the floor to see if it was good to eat.

Fear can lead us to close ourselves off from others, keep us from reaching across economic, racial or religious divides to get to know another person.

We talked with the worker as she stood near the bars separating us from the rhinos. One walked over to her and stuck its head with its long horn through the opening between bars. The worker petted its rough, hairy hide, and the animal looked at us with plaintive eyes.

I carried in my mind pictures from movies or TV documentaries of people on safari fleeing a rushing rhino. Without denying that reality or debating the purpose of zoos, I found this docile creature endearing. It clearly trusted the worker who fed it and called it by name. And she did not fear the rhino but clearly loved it.

Stanley Green (page 18) writes that if we Mennonites are going to follow Jesus in reaching out to others with healing and hope, to cure the sick and preach the gospel, as Jesus commanded the 70 in Luke 10:1-12, then we must not be constrained by fear of failure or by fear of vulnerability.

Fear can lead us to close ourselves off from others, keep us from reaching across economic, racial or religious divides to get to know another person.

Fear can also lead us to want to control others who do not fit our ideas of what people should be. We may judge others to protect ourselves from self-scrutiny. Merton writes about a hatred of ourselves that is "too deep and too powerful to be consciously faced. For it is this which makes us see our own evil in others and unable to see it in ourselves."

Finding that love that casts out fear is about seeing. Jesus asks his disciples, "Do you have eyes and fail to see?" (Mark 8:18). Seeing requires looking, and looking requires courage. Seeing also requires faith. We must pray for eyes to see God's presence around us and find signs of love that overcome fear.

For me those eyes of the rhino provide a lesson not to hold too tightly to prejudices, such as that rhinos are fearsome beasts that must be avoided. They may be fearsome in certain contexts, but they may also be docile and willing to be petted.

As we seek to be a missional church, we will need the courage to set aside our fears, our clinging to security and surety, and reach out to people we don't know. And we need to be careful that our desire to bring healing and the hope of the gospel does not get mixed up with the need to control people. I suspect that in sharing our faith with others, we will experience growth in our own faith.

Because of God's kingdom, God's ultimate rule, and because of God's love shown through Jesus, we need not fear. Acting in love rather than fear, however, will require the love of one another to help us see ourselves and the world in the light of that love.—*gh*

The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Dec. 6, 2005.

TheMennonite

www.TheMennonite.org

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Race-ism is anti-Christ

Karl McKinney, former co-pastor at Reba Place of Rogers Park in Chicago, now works for Mennonite Mission Network.

Popular portrayals of race and race-ism betray a widespread inability to delve beneath the surface of white, internalized oppression. White people do not want to talk about race, therefore, when the discussion is led by whites, and rarely do they explore the enslavement that is race-ism in a full and honest way.

It was a surprise, therefore, when former drug czar and practicing Catholic Bill Bennett said on Sept. 28, "But I do know if you wanted to reduce crime, you could—if that were your sole purpose—you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down." The surprise was not that he is race-ist; that has been clear for awhile. The surprise was his obvious comfort to speak his views openly and almost nonchalantly. Here was the author of *The Book of Virtues* venting his race-ist views through the airwaves with neither pause nor reservation.

As soon as some in the media criticized Bennett, either for saying what he said or for saying it publicly, others rallied to his aid. Notably many Christian organizations came to Bennett's defense and did not take him to task for his comments.

Within a week, Bennett appeared on Focus on the Family with his friend James Dobson. I listened to that show and heard Dobson defend Bennett's prolife stance. Bennett's mixed-message statement did not attract the critical attention of evangelicalism's media elite.

Dobson affirmed Bennett's prolife stance yet ignored the Hitler-esque nature of Bennett's adjacent point. Not once did Dobson challenge Bennett's assertion, the factual basis underlying that assertion and the assumptions that Bennett must hold to propose such a hypothesis.

As the debate over Bennett's comment unfolded over two weeks, many Mennonites found themselves on either side of the debate. Did you recognize that Bennett felt comfortable postulating such a hypothetical situation because the subject of his scenario was blacks?

If you did, you are a minority white Mennonite. And if you did, I ask you for a favor to your other white Mennonites: Write Dobson. I'm not asking you to write Bennett; he has done everything he can to escape responsibility for his race-ism.

I ask Mennonites who recognized the violence in Bennett's comment to write Dr. James Dobson and Focus on the Family. Tell them you think they should have taken Bennett to task for his blatantly violent and factually inaccurate hypothesis (see DeWayne Wickham's article "Bill Bennett's Thesis: Racist? Maybe. Wrong? Absolutely," *USA Today*, Oct. 4). Tell them they missed an opportunity to exalt Christ above whiteness, even as they responded to Bennett's need for support as a prolife spokesman. Point out you find it morally reprehensible that the abortion of babies in the wombs of black Christian mothers would contribute to the reduction of the crime rate.

At some point in the life of the church, whites are going to have to abandon race, race-ism and the ill-gotten gains of oppression and injustice. Until then, the few of you who recognize the ways white supremacists reinforce whiteness while claiming to follow Jesus will have to speak up. It will cost you reputation in your congregation and the admiration of people in your white communities. It may even cost you your job and promotion prospects.

James Dobson needs to know you do not think race-ism is godly but is in fact anti-Christ. He needs to know that even his friends should be admonished to be changed by the renewing of their minds.

If Dobson cannot speak this clearly as a follower of Jesus Christ to his high profile friends, surely those of you who share his plight in whiteness can encourage him to do so. Please don't let this opportunity pass you by.

TheMennonite

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Mennonite evangelism

Re "Mennonite Evangelism" (Nov. 1): Some of us have known a little secret for years. Evangelism is plain and simple: Be aware and be willing to act. What does that mean? All kinds of things: giving a sobbing receptionist money to pay her light bill, backing your fellow secretary in her claim of unfair treatment, taking time to discuss your faith journey with an inquisitive co-worker, recognizing and naming the Jesus in your agnostic friend, listening and listening and listening to a fellow traveler in the transplant world, complimenting people who do a good job, absolutely and totally refusing to fit the mold.

Did I grasp every opportunity? Of course not. Did my actions ever "convert" anyone? Who knows? They have, however, given me a wonderful life full of friends and few regrets.—*Debra Bender, Chicago*

Should do better

In "Church People Should Do Better" (Nov. 15), Al Albrecht implies that I bore primary responsibility for the way the decision about the proposed Great Lakes Conference was managed. The plan for that meeting was authored by the moderators and presidents, executive staff, and executive bodies of Central District Conference, Illinois Mennonite Conference, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference and Ohio Conference of the Mennonite Church in consultation with executives of Mennonite Church USA and other professional consultants.—*Dale Shenk, former moderator of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference*

While we want to engage Al Albrecht personally around both philosophical and stylistic issues raised in "Church People Should Do Better," a public response is appropriate with respect to his characterization of absentee voters. Albrecht stated that "more than one-half of Ohio's no voters" were absentee votes. He assumed that all the absentee votes were "no" votes. This is incorrect. Of the 68 absentee votes, 43 were "no" votes and 25 were "yes" votes. Ohio allowed absentee votes because the date selected for the Great Lakes meeting caused schedule conflicts for a number of our delegates. Albrecht did not treat absentee delegates kindly by saying they "failed to carry out their church's assignment." Absent Ohio delegates took their assignment seriously and sent in their votes, but Albrecht again treated them unkindly by saying they "trivialized the mutual counsel and prayers asking for the Spirit's guidance."

More substantial conversations with people who participated in this event prior to writing the article could have provided greater accuracy and perhaps more charity toward absentee voters.—*Tom Kauffman, conference minister, and Allen Rutter, former moderator, Ohio Conference of Mennonite Church USA*

Nonvoting participants

With great sadness I learned that on Nov. 5 a majority of the delegates of Allegheny Mennonite Conference voted to discipline Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church by taking away their voting privileges and forbidding them to hold elected positions in the conference or Mennonite Church USA ("Hyattsville Church a 'Nonvoting Participant,'" Nov. 15). This action seems to conflict with what we learned in Sunday school last week when we studied Ephesians 2 about living in unity because we are all one in Jesus Christ.

I don't understand Mennonite politics. There are many congregations across the United States that are "at variance" with our church teachings. The most obvious ones are those who do not allow women in leadership positions, those who do not support the church's peace position and those who do not discipline heterosexuals who have pre- or extramarital relations. Why aren't they being disciplined?—*Joyce Hostetler, Columbus, Ohio*

More purpose-driven

John Stoner's article ("We Need a Larger Purpose," Nov. 1) should raise concerns for all of us as to what happens when we mix politics and faith. When we become intolerant of those fellow Christians who don't share our personal bent, we become arrogant, critical and fail to mirror Jesus' image. Just because Rick Warren doesn't empha-

IN THIS ISSUE

Several articles about nonconformity challenge us in our assimilation to both nationalism and North American culture. Paul Lederach (page 8) says, "Jesus made it clear … that to worship and serve only God means primary allegiance cannot be given to any nation." Lederach also says that "citizens of the kingdom [of God] form a radical counterculture." Ernie Martin calls for more of this radical faithfulness in the Mennonite church (page 12) and compares the marks of nonconformity during his childhood with what is missing from the church today. "Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (NIV)" is the portion of Romans 12:2 Martin emphasizes. He lists some "patterns of this world" that need to be addressed by the church: a judgmental spirit founded on the need to be in control, labels we use to stereotype people and gossip. Finally we see the ministry of Mennonite Central Committee's Jack Hijazin (page 16); his Christian countercultural nonconformity among Muslim friends testifies to the kingdom of God that knows no national or cultural boundaries.—*Editor* size the far left that Stoner supports, Stoner calls *The Purpose-Driven Life* a "dangerous book." Warren has led thousands of people into relationship with God and teaches obedience to Scripture. Isn't that what the Christian life is all about? How can Stoner call Warren's book untruthful and dangerous? He sounds like the arrogant scribes and Pharisees Jesus had to deal with.—*Sharon Lefever, Lancaster, Pa.*

John Stoner seems to be misinformed in his analysis of Rick Warren and Purpose-Driven Ministries. This movement is not "setting aside the comprehensive vision of salvation" and simply seeking to "save some souls," as Stoner indicates. Rather, Warren is challenging Christians at personal, corporate and world levels to work together to bring a holistic, balanced gospel to the world. Stoner does the purpose-driven movement a disservice by equating it with the religious right.

The "40 Days of Purpose" and "40 Days of Community" campaigns sponsored by Warren and Saddleback Community Church are helping many of our congregations to a healthy balance of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism. The current campaign, "40 Days of Peace," is further helping congregations and denominations overcome illiteracy, disease, poverty, self-centered leadership and spiritual emptiness by educating the next generation, caring for the sick, assisting the poor, equipping servant leaders and planting new churches. That is going much deeper than simply "saving some souls."

While I have also been critical of Warren's omissions, I like his way of doing holistic evangelism better than the way most of us are not doing it. —*Palmer Becker, Hesston, Kan.*

I wonder whether John Stoner even read the table of contents of the Rick Warren book he so roundly (or narrowly?) criticized. I had scanned parts of the book earlier and remembered it differently. So I checked the book itself and saw that Warren writes "the reason for everything" is to bring glory to God. We do this by, among other things, "becoming like Christ" and "serving others with our gifts."

Since Warren wrote *The Purpose-Driven Life*, much of what he wrote came home to him in a new way. Psalm 72 provided the turning point, and Warren has said, "I went back and I began to read Scripture, and it was like blinders came off. Now, I've got three advanced degrees. I've had four years in Greek and Hebrew and I've got doctorates. And how did I miss 2,000 verses in the Bible where it talks about the poor? How did I miss that? I mean, I went to two different seminaries and a Bible school; how did I miss the 2,000 verses on the poor?"—*Steve Hochstetler Shirk, Hyattsville, Md.*

Help needed in Mississippi

The Gulfhaven (Miss.) Mennonite Church building suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Katrina. It appears that most of the damage will be covered by insurance. Some families in our congregation also had various levels of damage, including almost total destruction of their homes.

We are completing the clean-up phase and entering the rebuilding phase. In addition to helping our families who have suffered losses, we will be entering a major rebuilding phase for the church. Our pastor has been very involved up to this point but does not want to be a building contractor—and shouldn't have to be.

We desperately need someone who would volunteer two or three months of their time to come to Gulfport and coordinate these rebuilding projects. We hope to find someone who has experience as a builder. This person would need to be able to survey jobs, develop materials lists, manage volunteer crews who will be coming to help. Others from within our congregation will help in the management and administration, but none has building experience. If you know of someone who might be interested in this position, please contact Nelson Roth at nelson@gulfhaven.com.—*Dave Weaver, Gulfport, Miss.*

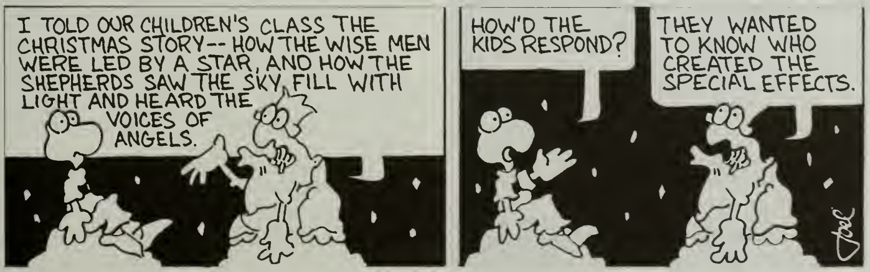
ONLINE POLL RESULTS

I consume alcoholic drinks (143 votes):

○ Occasionally (46%)
○ Regularly (22%)
○ Never (32%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle **Joel Kauffmann**


I TOLD OUR CHILDREN'S CLASS THE CHRISTMAS STORY-- HOW THE WISE MEN WERE LED BY A STAR, AND HOW THE SHEPHERDS SAW THE SKY FILL WITH LIGHT AND HEARD THE VOICES OF ANGELS.
HOW'D THE KIDS RESPOND?
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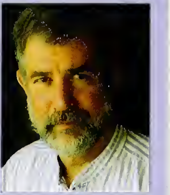
Joel

IN BRIEF



Hostetter named MCC's UN liaison

Mennonite Central Committee has appointed Doug Hostetter, a Mennonite pastor and longtime peace activist, as its liaison to the United Nations. Most recently of Evanston, Ill., Hostetter has served as a peace pastor at Evanston Mennonite Church since 2003. He began his career as an MCC worker in Vietnam (1966-69) and has since served in numerous faith-based peace organizations, including the United Methodist Office for the United Nations, American Friends Service Committee and Fellowship of Reconciliation, where he served as executive secretary from 1987 to 1993. —*MCC*

Children's habits

- Average minutes children 6 and under spend using TV, video, DVD or computers per day: 118
- Minutes reading or being read to: 39
- Number of TV commercials viewed by American children every year: 40,000
- Age by which a child can develop brand loyalty: 2

—*Yes!*

CPT workers abducted in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Iraq—On Nov. 26, two members of Christian Peacemaker Teams and two members of a CPT visiting delegation were abducted in Baghdad.

"We were very saddened to see the images of our loved ones on Al Jazeera television," CPT said in a statement released Nov. 29. "We were disturbed by seeing the video and believe that repeated showing of it will endanger the lives of our friends. We pray that those who hold them will be merciful and that they will be released soon."

Tom Fox, age 54, Clearbrook, Va., has worked with CPT for the past two years. Fox has been faithful in the observance of Quaker practice for 22 years. Fox plays the bass clarinet and the recorder. He also has worked as a professional grocer and has served as an adult leader of youth programs and worked at a Quaker camp for youth.

Norman Kember, age 74, is from London, England. He and his wife of 45 years have two married daughters and a 3-year-old grandson. Before his retirement he was a professor teaching medical students at St Bartholemew's Hospital in London. He is well-known as a peace activist and has been involved in several peace groups. For the past 10 years he has volunteered with a local program providing free food to the homeless.

James Loney, 41, is a community worker from Toronto, Canada. He has been a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams since August 2000 and is currently program coordinator for CPT Canada. On previous visits to Iraq, his work focused on taking testimonies from families of detainees for CPT's report on detainee abuse and making recommendations for securing basic legal rights. Loney was leading the November delegation in Iraq when he went missing. Loney is a peace activist, writer and trained mediator and works actively with two Toronto community conflict resolution services.

"I believe that our actions as a people of peace must be an expression of hope for everyone," Loney wrote recently in a personal statement to CPT. "My hope in practising nonviolence is that I can be a conduit for the transformative power of God's love acting upon me as much as I hope it will act upon others around me."

Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32, is a Canadian electrical engineer. He is studying for a master's degree in English literature in Auckland University in New Zealand to prepare for a teaching career. He enjoys art, is active in squash and worked part time as a local squash coach. His family describes him as peaceful and fun-loving, and he is known to be passionate about the plight of the underprivileged around the globe.

Christian Peacemaker Teams has been present in Iraq since October 2002, providing firsthand, independent reports from the region, working with detainees of both U.S. and Iraqi forces, and training others in nonviolent intervention and human rights documentation.—*Christian Peacemaker Teams*

Ruby Hochstedler

Tornadoes hit southern Indiana

Nearly every family in the Providence (Ind.) Mennonite Church knew someone affected by the Nov. 15 tornadoes that destroyed 65 homes and killed 1,000 animals across Daviess County, home to a large Amish and conservative Mennonite community. Providence, the only Mennonite Church USA congregation there has one family that lost its house and barn. While every family unit had close relatives impacted, says Providence pastor Jarvis Hochstedler, "only five people went to the hospital." Aware of dangerous weather, leaders at K & K Industries sent 100 workers—mostly Amish—home early and told the second shift to stay away. The business was completely destroyed.—*Everett Thomas*

BIC church allows woman to preach

BEIRA CITY, Mozambique—On Sept. 8, Agness Lijero preached a sermon from the pulpit of a Brethren in Christ (BIC) church here, the first woman to do so.

Over several months, women repeatedly asked the Manga BIC church board for the opportunity to preach. The board struggled with their request, unsure whether they could allow women to preach given Paul's admonition that women remain silent in church. After the third appeal, the board agreed that it would be possible for women to preach.

At this historic event, Lijero preached about Christian marriage. Christians should marry only other Christians, she said, basing her counsel on God's order to the Israelites not to marry idol worshippers.

In Africa, commented Elizabeth Palibendipo, women are the ones who spend the most time with the children as caregivers and counselors. It is important that they help them grow spiritually and raise them in the church.—*MWC*

oser to the Capitol

e Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is locating to a town house at 920 Pennsylvania Avenue, about ght blocks from the U.S. Capitol. Earl Martin, a contractor ho worked on renovating the building, stands at the front of e town house.—*MCC U.S.*

Mission Woodworking receives MMA award

GOSHEN, Ind.—In 1998, Kevin and Pat Beck founded Mission Woodworking with an end in mind. They wanted to support Christian mission work with the business' profits. Now 12 employees of the business are also behind that end result and are involved in its unique use of profits.

On Nov. 7, MMA interim president and CEO Steve L. Garboden presented the Becks and Mission Woodworking an MMA Journey Award, recognizing their stewardship of their talents and resources. The business itself shares the award since employees are involved in carrying out the company's vision and choosing mission projects that receive the profits. The award was presented at the business' offices in Bristol, Ind.

This national Journey Award recognizes people and groups who model Christian stewardship of God's gifts.—*MMA*

Norman H. Derstine dies at 85

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Norman H. Derstine, who devoted more than 50 years to church ministry, died Nov. 4 at Park Place, Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, at age 85.

From 1951 to 1961, Derstine served as program director, associate pastor and announcer for "The Mennonite Hour," a weekly radio broadcast produced by Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc.

Derstine was ordained to the ministry on Feb. 10, 1952, at Trissels Mennonite Church near Broadway, Va., and served there for four years. In 1962, he accepted the pastorate at Roanoke Mennonite Church, Eureka, Ill., and served there for seven years.

Norman H. Derstine

He returned to the former Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg to be its first director of church relations.

After serving 1976-78 as director of religious broadcasting in Botswana, Derstine returned to Harrisonburg and became director of seminary admissions and grantsman at the college.

Following his retirement from EMC in 1984, he served as interim pastor for congregations in Kalona, Iowa; Salem, Ore.; Phoenix, Ariz.; and Lebanon, Ore. In 2002, Eastern Mennonite Seminary recognized Derstine for 50 years of church-related ministry.

In addition to Virginia M. Martin, his wife, Derstine is survived by a son, Jerry Derstine, and his wife, Jan Garrett, of Snowmass, Colo.; a daughter, Jean Cubbage, and her husband James Cubbage of Harrisonburg; a brother, a sister, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.—*EMU*

Roast a pig and they will come

BARBERTON, Ohio—Summit Mennonite Church in Barberton and Crown Hill Mennonite Church in nearby Rittman hosted a pig roast Oct. 1 in the Summit's front yard. About 200 people from the surrounding communities came and enjoyed free food and fellowship.

Rob Burdette, Summit's pastor, had encouraged his congregation to "let yourselves dream." A similar event the year before brought only two people from outside the churches.

The church doors were open for people to use restrooms or the nursery, and live music played in the sanctuary.

Gordon Miller, pastor of Crown Hill, and Myron and Myrna Ramseyer helped with planning and providing food, and William Shoup donated the 150-pound pig.—*Pam Zook*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

IN BRIEF

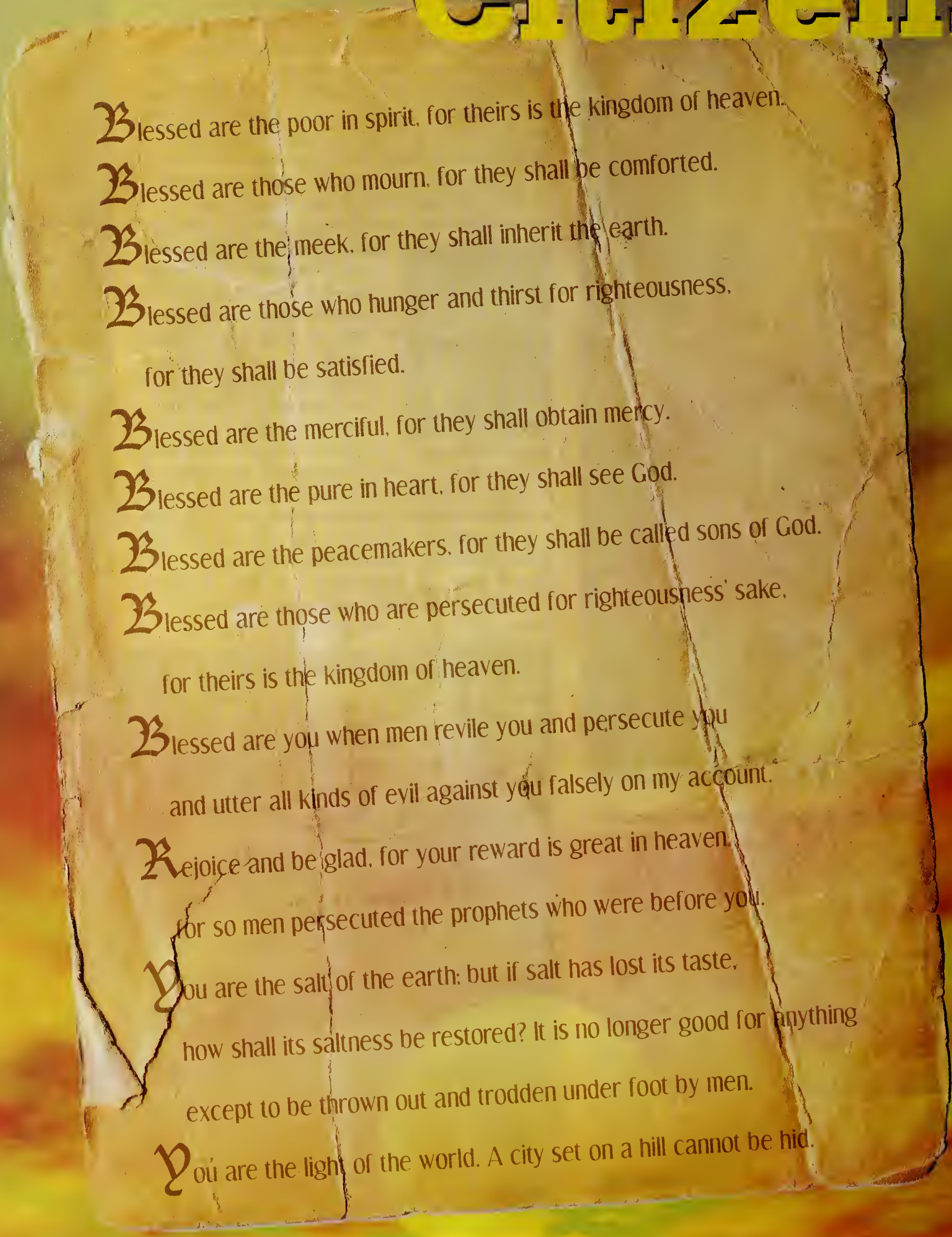
10 misguided psychology ideas

Robert Epstein, West Coast editor of *Psychology Today*, offers the "Loose Screw" awards to the top 10 misguided ideas of the 20th century:

1. "Nearly infallible" tests (Rorschach-type tests that rarely reveal information that can't be obtained in more practical ways).
2. Recovered memories (memories can be easily planted by suggestion).
3. Boot camps (did not stop repeat offenses).
4. Self-esteem programs (feeling good does not necessarily cause people to do well).
5. Codependency theories (abandoning a substance abuser usually makes the problem worse).
6. Mozart babies (Mozart was smart, but he can't make your baby smart).
7. Kubler-Ross' stages of dying (many patients do not go down the five-step path).
8. Rebirthing therapy (sometimes fatal).
9. inevitable teen angst (has not been substantiated).
10. Catharsis theory (expressing pent-up anger tends to make you more angry, not less).

—Christian Week

Citizens



Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you
and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,
for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste,
how shall its saltness be restored? It is no longer good for anything
except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid.

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# of the kingdom

The kingdom of God is central to Jesus and the early church.

by Paul M. Lederach

The kingdom of God is the rule of God in human affairs. It is mentioned 56 times in Matthew, 21 times in Mark and 46 times in Luke.

Luke begins with Jesus' birth. The angel Gabriel said to Mary about Jesus, "of his kingdom there will be no end" (1:33). Following Jesus' baptism, he went into the wilderness to meditate and to plan his ministry. There Jesus was tempted by Satan. The devil showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. Then he said, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." But Jesus replied, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him' " (Luke 4:6-8). This conversation reveals that the kingdoms of this world are fallen. To identify with and pursue their glory, power and authority is indeed a temptation. Jesus made it clear, and his followers also understand, that to worship and serve only God means primary allegiance cannot be given to a nation. After leaving the wilderness, Jesus went to Capernaum, a town by the Sea of Galilee. To the crowds that gathered Jesus said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God … for I was sent for this purpose" (Luke 4:43).

Jesus made it clear, and his followers also understand, that to worship and serve only God means primary allegiance cannot be given to a nation.

Nicodemus came to see Jesus. In their conversation Jesus told him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Later in their conversation, Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (John 3:5). Jesus said the purpose of the new birth is more than to be saved and go to heaven. It is to see and enter the kingdom here and now.

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Three divine gifts: With new birth comes three divine gifts: new life, called "eternal life" (John 3:16); a new family in which fellow believers are brothers and sisters (Galatians 6:10); new citizenship in the kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:19; Colossians 3:20).

Jesus gathered 12 disciples as his closest followers. He commissioned them to preach, saying, "As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near'" (Matthew 10:7).

The kingdom was central in Jesus' teaching. He said the kingdom was like

- a mustard seed (Matthew 13:1). As a small seed grows to a large tree, so the kingdom with a small beginning will embrace the whole world.
- yeast (Matthew 13:33). The kingdom permeates the world like yeast in bread dough.
- a merchant in search of fine pearls, and like a treasure hidden in a field (Matthew 13:44). Disciples are ready to seek first the kingdom (Matthew 6:33).

A kingdom citizen in the United States is not primarily a Republican or a Democrat, is neither liberal nor conservative.

After the resurrection, Jesus presented himself alive to the apostles, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). When he ascended, he went to the right hand of the throne of God, the place of ultimate power and glory. Jesus' words as he ascended were, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." This authority is greater than that of the world's kingdoms—much greater than that offered in the wilderness.

The kingdom of God was central in the early church. In Samaria, Philip proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God (Acts 8:12). As Paul traveled "he spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8). Acts concludes with Paul in Rome. There Paul is "proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness" (Acts 28:31).

According to the New Testament, the kingdom of God is the new reality. The Roman Empire had outposts of power and authority throughout the world. In the same way, the kingdom of God has outposts throughout the world. The gathered communities of people who give primary allegiance to Jesus Christ and who live lives following his example and teachings are outposts of the kingdom. In the Roman Empire the declaration of allegiance was "Caesar is Lord." In the church, however, the primary confession is, "Jesus is Lord." Jesus' full name is Lord Jesus Christ. To utter his full name is to recognize the centrality of his kingdom.

The constitution: The Sermon on the Mount is the constitution for the kingdom of God (Matthew 5, 6, 7). It is addressed to disciples, followers of Jesus who put his example and teachings into practice. The constitution makes clear that life in the kingdom is different from life in kingdoms of the world. There self-seeking, self-assertion and self-preservation are the norm. The sermon reveals how disciples live having hearts and minds transformed by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:2).

In Matthew, Jesus lists six areas in which Old Testament laws and people's lives are transformed:

1. Anger is dealt with through reconciliation (5:21-26).
2. Lust is disciplined (5:27-30).
3. Marriage is honored along with lifelong fidelity (5:31-21).
4. Language is simple and honest (5:33-37).
5. Retaliation is not an option (5:38-42).
6. There is love for enemy (5:43-48).

Citizens of the kingdom form a radical counter culture. Jesus' disciples are meek, merciful, pure, peacemakers and ready to suffer for his sake.

A kingdom citizen is in the world but not of the world. A kingdom citizen in the United States is not primarily a Republican or a Democrat, is neither liberal nor conservative. To follow Jesus' teachings at times makes one liberal, at other times conservative. John Roth (see Aug. 9, page 10) suggests it's time for Mennonites to take a sabbatical from partisan politics. When caught up in the passions and antagonisms between those on the left and those on the right, there is danger of losing sight of the nonresistant separatist way of life important to Anabaptist Mennonite faith.

Since our beginning, Mennonites have been aware of kingdom citizenship. In the Swiss village of Schleitheim early leaders gathered on Feb. 24, 1527, to articulate the faith. They agreed that

- governments rule according to the flesh, the Christian according to the Spirit;
- their houses and dwellings remain in the world; the Christian's are in heaven;

- their citizenship is in the world; the Christian's citizenship is in heaven;
- the weapons of their warfare and conflict are carnal and against the flesh only, while the Christian's weapons are spiritual against the fortifications of the devil;
- the worldlings are armed with steel and iron, but the Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and the word of God.

In brief, as is the mind of Christ toward us, so shall the mind of the members of the body of Christ be through him in all things.

Salt and light: Christians who fail to put the kingdom first serve neither the nation nor the church well. Nations act in self-interest, pursue power and seek economic well-being. Citizens of the kingdom seek to serve, to be salt and light in a dark, violent world. Citizens of the kingdom are grieved when national leaders use biblical language to describe and support national policy, hoping it will appear moral and good. When national leaders characterize an enemy as evil, then war becomes a moral campaign and gives legitimacy to war, humanity's most evil endeavor.

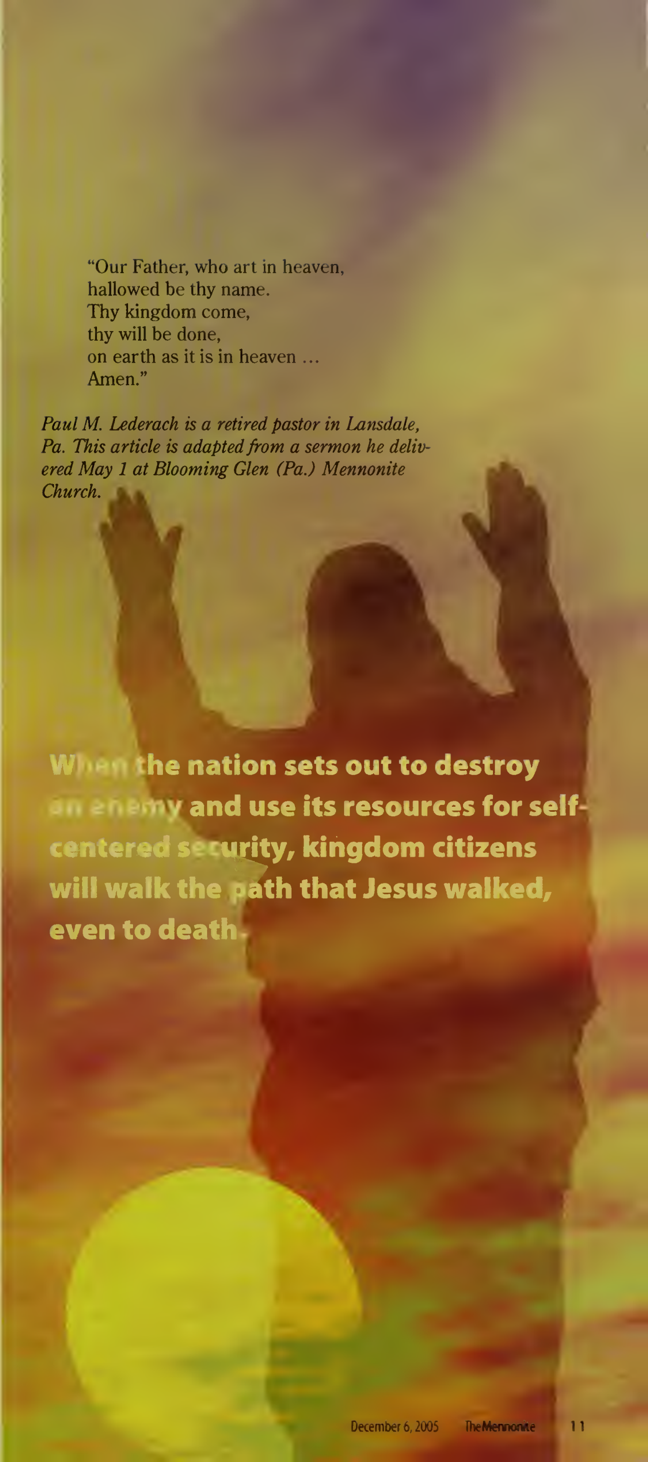
The state seeks the loyalty and allegiance that belongs only to the Lord Jesus and his kingdom. Why sing "God Bless America" when national actions are contrary to the ways of God as revealed by his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ? John Howard Yoder wrote in *The Priestly Kingdom* (Notre Dame Press, 1984) that no government should claim to speak for God, and no nation should presume God's aid for selfish pursuits.

The kingdom of God is worldwide and includes believers from every nation, tribe, language and people. It is the "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9) to which disciples give fervent love and care. To give primary allegiance to the kingdom of God is to engage in acts of compassion and deeds of mercy: to feed the hungry, provide shelter for the poor, seek justice, care for the elderly, disabled and mentally ill, and provide health care for all.

Kingdom citizens follow Jesus, who revealed the Father as the God of peace, who loves the enemy. (Romans 15:33, 16:20; Philippians 4:9, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11) When the nation sets out to destroy an enemy and use its resources for self-centered security, kingdom citizens will walk the path that Jesus walked, even to death, and pray as he taught:

"Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven …
Amen."

Paul M. Lederach is a retired pastor in Lansdale, Pa. This article is adapted from a sermon he delivered May 1 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.



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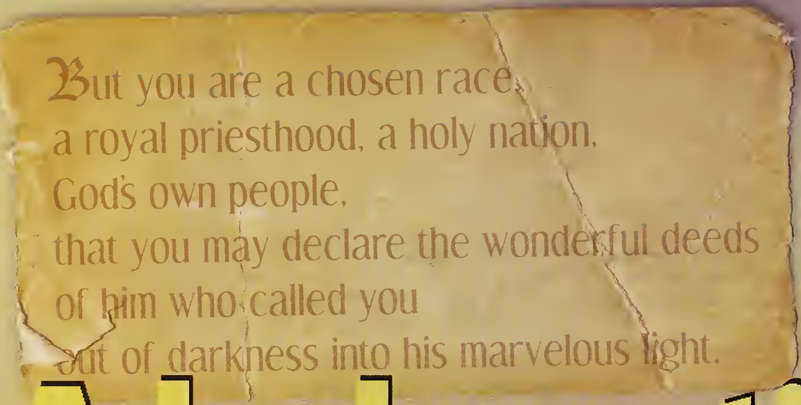

But you are a chosen race,
a royal priesthood, a holy nation,
God's own people,
that you may declare the wonderful deeds
of him who called you
out of darkness into his marvelous light.

A holy nation

by Ernie Martin

What it means to be a community of believers today

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.— 1 Peter 2:9, NIV

Peter addresses his letter to God's elect, "strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Asia … a people belonging to God." Today Peter might address the community of believers "scattered throughout Virginia, North Carolina, Canada and Latin America."

Later Peter pictures believers as people who "love each other deeply" (1:22). Deep love is characterized at least in part by those who refrain from judgment and labeling one another. Earlier Christ had mandated that each person in his community of believers is "to love the Lord God with all heart, soul, mind and strength—and to love one's neighbor as oneself." What might this vision of a holy nation (a community of believers) mean for the Mennonite Church today?

When I grew up in the 1950s and early '60s, "holy nation" partly meant something different from what it does today.

When I grew up in the 1950s and early '60s, "holy nation" partly meant something different from what it does today. Holiness in the '50s and '60s had a lot to do with "being nonconformed to the world." This phrase from Romans 12:2 was drilled into youth then.

The Mennonite Education Agency's theme or vision also focuses on Romans 12:2, but the emphasis is on the second part of the verse, "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." In my high school years at Eastern Mennonite High School (EMHS) in Harrisonburg, Va., during the early '60s, conformity was largely defined (at least to the mind of a 16-year-old) with a long list of don'ts:

- Girls were not to wear jeans, pants or short skirts.
- Going to movies was a cardinal sin. I remember an EMHS student who got caught and was suspended for two weeks.
- Owning a television was a test of membership in many Mennonite churches.
- Boys were required to wear long pants to play basketball; girls were required to wear their head coverings to play sports.

All this emphasis on nonconformity tended to breed either a judgmental spirit or hostility against the church (sometimes both).

But with a major emphasis on nonconformity came another significant emphasis, one calling us to consider service and mission, with focus on compassion and living a life of love and peace. There were many opportunities to serve, such as Sunday afternoon visits to a nearby rehabilitation center or going to outlying mission churches to teach Sunday school. Also many missionaries and folks in service assignments spoke in chapel, classes and in worship—telling stories of compassion and love.

This service-mission emphasis sowed a seed in my soul, even though I'm not sure I was aware of it at the time. After graduating from college, my wife and I spent three years with Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Teachers Abroad Program, which placed teachers in schools across Africa. I taught English as a second language at Malosa Secondary School in Malawi, Central Africa. There we not only learned to know another segment of God's holy community of believers but discovered three important understandings about what it means to belong to a community of believers:

1. Outward appearance, different theology and different practices matter little in developing close, trusting relationships. Malosa teachers were a diverse group: French, Canadian, Scottish, British, Malawian, South African, Israeli, American. In terms of religious belief and practice we ranged from Mennonite to Presbyterian to High Anglican. Yet we were able to worship together, we respected and valued one another and we shared a common mission in our teaching. This group was all we had for three years. We learned to look past the differences and became family. Unfortunately, in our modern American culture, we rarely are required to look past the differences and embrace a broader group. Rather we tend to erect boundaries and place people in neatly defined categories.

2. I was raised to believe and was taught by my parents, church and school that God's community of believers is substantially defined by peace (not going to war). But listen to the story of Maurice Carver, a retired British businessman serving as business manager for the school. He and his wife were devout Anglicans and fully funding their time at Malosa. (In contrast, we were given a small stipend by MCC to meet our cost-of-living needs.) Having fought in both World War I and II, Maurice believed passionately that he had helped protect the world from evil. He had learned that Mennonites do not believe in war. He and I spent long hours discussing why I would not go to war and why he did. We never agreed with each other but came to a position of mutual respect, and I came to the conclusion that it was not my responsibility to judge him. He clearly was a devout believer in Christ and committed to his church, yet he had gone to war. I had (and have) to be willing to leave that judgment to God, which leads me to my third learning.

In our modern American culture, we rarely are required to look past the differences and embrace a broader group. Rather we tend to erect boundaries and place people in neatly defined categories.

3. A critical, judgmental spirit and attitude is probably the biggest hindrance to becoming a holy community of believers. About a year after we arrived at Malosa, we learned that Judy and I were the first Mennonites this community had encountered. Exploring the encyclopedia, they read about the Old Order Mennonites and Amish. For weeks a debate raged about how to get us from Mombassa, the closest port on the Indian Ocean. (They were sure we would come by ship and not fly.) And they were not sure we would ride in a car. Imagine their

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

relief when they discovered we would arrive at the airport, some 60 miles away and that it was OK to pick us up in a van.

This small group of believers withheld judgment, allowed us to enter their community and made many efforts to learn to know us well. In contrast, they could have labeled us weird and a threat to their beliefs, which would have led to a highly uncomfortable situation. Yet a year later we all had a good laugh over it.

What does all this mean for practicing holy community in our families, churches and schools today? Not nearly so much emphasis is placed on outward nonconformity, which is probably a good thing. But I am concerned that we have lost a healthy emphasis on Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (NIV).

The theological and practical emphasis has switched from the first half of the verse to the second half, yet often we yield to the subtle human tendency toward a judgmental spirit founded on the need to be in control. A judgmental spirit is a pattern of this world and stands in the way of mind renewal. In the first recorded sin, Adam labels and blames Eve for the crisis in the garden: "She made me eat." And consider all the labels we use to group people by specific, stereotyped characteristics: whites, blacks, Hispanics, gifted, learning disabled, special needs students, minorities, rednecks, conservatives, liberals.

Technology allows us to be uncommonly rude, insensitive and slanderous in emails and instant messaging.

Furthermore, gossip (another "pattern" of this world) is an insidious form of judgment and labeling and often runs rampant. Unfortunately, technology allows us to be uncommonly rude, insensitive and slanderous in emails and instant messaging. Facial expressions cannot be read, so we remain oblivious to the unloving, judgmental effect the written word may have.

Most Mennonite churches include a broader range of believers than in the 1960s. The church community now includes different denominational backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, diverse and often outspoken political beliefs and a range of family structures. If we are true to our mission, the diversity among us will only increase. (Rather than diversity, biblical teachings define God's community of believers as neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek.)

Christ further says: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged and the measure you give will be the measure you get" (Matthew 7:1-2). Elsewhere God says, "Judgment is mine; I will repay." Loving your neighbor as yourself requires the suspension of judgment. Indeed, each individual in God's "holy nation" must guard against the strong human tendency to exercise judgment.

In *Here and Now*, Henri Nouwen writes, "Can we free ourselves from the need to judge others?" And he answers, "Yes … by claiming for ourselves the truth that we are the beloved daughters and sons of God." Exercising deep love requires seeing ourselves, classmates, teachers, peers, parents, grandparents and all members of the body of Christ as "beloved daughters and sons of God." Only then can we suspend judgment and fully embrace "do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Ernie Martin is assistant principal and English teacher at Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va. This article is adapted from a chapel presentation he gave there on Feb. 2.

Deerfly

by Jeff Gundy

When I was a redwinged blackbird I knew every post and stump,
I could tell exactly when it was time to fly.

When I was a water lily I gave all my best leaves to the pond, and
my best blossoms too.

When I was a cattail I knew my friends and my numerous
enemies by their scent and their shape and the size of their stems.

When I was the multiflora rose I found many cozy spots, I was
thorny but hip, I was nicer to the bluebirds than the crows.

When I was the duckweed I stuck to any bird I could, half the
time I didn't even bother with the flowers, just split whenever I
got the chance.

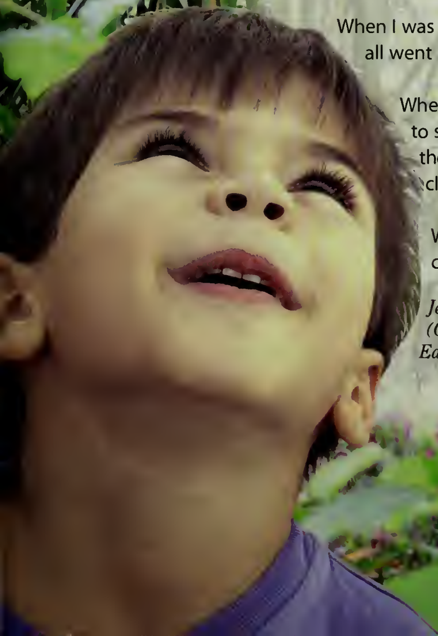
When I was the pond I rested for weeks on end, let the wind and
the sun do all the work, said *whatever* all the time.

When I was the sun I had many urgent and utopian ideas, I
changed millions of tons of this into that, I didn't care who
watched or burned themselves blind trying.

When I was the path everybody thought they used me, but they
all went exactly where I wanted them to go.

When I was Jeff I walked some paths, sat beside ponds, listened
to songs I couldn't name. During the eclipse I looked straight at
the sun for an instant and afterwards I could still see, though never as
clear or as far as I dreamed.

When I was a deerfly I zoomed around everybody's head, as if I
could persuade them my troubles were their own.



Jeff Gundy is professor of English and faculty scholar at Bluffton (Ohio) University. His new book of poems is Deerflies *(WordTech Editions, 2004).*

Hope and fear

by Everett J. Thomas

Mennonite Central Committee and Habitat for Humanity bring hope to Muslim town in Jordan.

In Jordan when they hear my family name," says Giacomo "Jack" Hijazin, "they know I am Christian."

Jack is Mennonite Central Committee's program coordinator for Jordan and works out of MCC's Middle East office in Amman.

"I know that my work is raising a lot of questions [among Jordanian Muslims]," Jack says, "and they ask, 'Why is he doing that?' I am a real, live witness to Jesus without telling them 'You are wrong; I am right.' "

Jack is also something of a celebrity in the northern Jordanian town of Himmeh, which has received so much assistance from MCC that a group of Christian journalists from the United States (see box on page 17) visiting on Nov. 8 began calling it "that Mennonite village."

Himmeh is a poor valley town of 2,500 slowly being transformed by MCC work. Several miles to the north, the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights rise like a fortress. On top of the hill just south of town is Gadara, the place where Jesus met several men living in cemeteries and drove the demons out of them into a herd of pigs (Matthew 8:28-34). To the west lies the Sea of Galilee and the cliffs over which the

n Jordan

demon-possessed pigs were driven.

But in early November residents of Himmeh were helping put up bracing for forms onto which concrete would be poured. The concrete pad will form the roof of a solid new house under construction. The house is much like the 99 others built by Habitat for Humanity and MCC in this town of curious and hospitable Muslims.

In addition to partnering with Habitat, MCC pays the salaries for several teachers in the village school and is helping renovate the building. Himmeh is also one of five Jordanian communities in which MCC provides microcredit loans totaling $100,000.

With 15 to 20 percent of the town's young adults unemployed, MCC provides scholarships for some in the village to attend Jordanian universities. These young adults from Himmeh are among the 28 students from five Jordanian villages who attend university through MCC's Global Family Program. All successfully completed their first year and are back for a second.

Two scholarship recipients from Himmeh come from a fatherless family, and the widow welcomed the group of U.S. journalists into her home for tea and soft drinks (see photo on page 16). Himmeh residents who wish to receive MCC's scholarships, new houses and microcredit loans must first apply through the local benevolent society—what MCC calls a community-based organization (CBO). The society's president, who is elected to that position, works closely with Jack to decide which applicants should receive assistance.

"Because of the Crusades, it is important to restore good relations with Muslims," Jack said. "I am Arab, but I can say, 'I still love you.' I've met a lot of people who would like to be Christian, but it is against the law and [if they became Christian] it would break up families. Some [who became Christian] have to leave the country for safety."

The programs Jack administers for MCC throughout Jordan include support for the al-Adasiyyeh Girls School and a grant for the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt to fund the institutes' recently formed deaf-blind unit.

MCC also provides revolving loan funds in five Jordanian villages that focus on small businesses, agriculture and income generation. The goal is eventually to leave the capital for the funds in each village and have the CBOs implement the loan funds themselves. This has already happened in three of the communities.

Fear in Jordan follows its own 9/11

Associated Church Press and the Jordan Tourism Board sponsored a tour of Jordan Nov. 5-13. I participated in the tour and was able to arrange for the group to visit Himmeh. While the group was in Jordan, three hotels in Amman were bombed by Iraqi members of Al Qaeda. One of the hotels bombed was across the street from where we were staying. However, our group had left Amman at midday and traveled some 200 kilometers south to Petra. The bombings occurred at approximately 7 p.m. Jordanian time on Nov. 9. Because Jordan uses the British system for dates—placing the day first and the month second—the tragedy is marked as 9/11 on their calendar.—*Everett J. Thomas*

Far left: Camels wait for visitors at Wadi Rum. Left: Widow Merriam (left) and her son Issa host MCC's Jack Hijazin and a group of Christian journalists in her house in Himmeh, built by Habitat for Humanity. At right is Christine Moore of the Jordan Tourism Board. Merriam's two young adult children also receive university scholarships through MCC. Above: A Habitat for Humanity worker from Colorado and two men from the village place supports for the ceiling in a new house. Below: boys crowd around Sherri Wood Emmons, managing editor for *DisciplesWorld*, to see the digital photo she took of them. Photos by Everett J. Thomas

Passing on the pacifism

Katie Immel is communications director at Central Christian High School, Kidron, Ohio, and a member of Orrville (Ohio) Mennonite Church.

Mennonites are supposed to be pacifists. It's a generally known principle of Mennonite doctrine. But are we pacifists because that is what we believe Jesus teaches in the Bible and that is the will of God or because for many generations that has been our tradition?

Many Mennonites like to organize petitions and write letters to government protesting war. Mennonites are known for their "worldly mindedness" and service to humanity in all parts of the world. It is taboo in Mennonite circles to question pacifism; it is taken for granted that "Mennonite" equals "pacifist."

I'm not so sure this is a good thing. Making any belief or practice my own requires that I fully understand it, and I'm not sure this can happen without a few questions. I grew up in a Mennonite church, attended a Mennonite middle and high school, went to Mennonite church camp for many summers, counseled there, and now work at a Mennonite school. You would think that somewhere in there, I would have gained a firm grip on what pacifism really means and how it works in my life and my walk with Jesus. Not so. I never felt I was given a clear, thorough explanation, based on biblical teaching about the "peace stand." I was never challenged by others to explain to them what it meant. A friend of mine recently thought she was summing it up when she said she didn't think she could send her kids to a Mennonite school because of that whole "war is bad" thing.

I hope we can find a way to enable the coming generations of Mennonites to thoroughly understand and articulate what and why they believe much earlier in life than I did.

Growing up, I wondered how much more despair Hitler might have caused if force hadn't been used. I understood that the freedoms we have in this country concerning speech, practice and beliefs came about as a result of war. I knew that God commanded warriors and armies in the Old Testament to enter war. I also never understood why Mennonites lumped together "peace and justice." They were not always synonymous in my mind. Perhaps I didn't ask enough questions when I should have. The blame may be mostly mine. But none of these issues were addressed to my satisfaction by my teachers at church or school.

This year I got my hands on a paper titled "War and Peace in Christian Tradition: Why I am an Engaged Christian Pacifist" written by former Malone College professor John David Geib. Reading his paper in some sense made the light in my head come on, cleared up many of my questions, and because of his words I have now sorted through many of the issues I had and know that pacifism is more than believing that "war is bad."

The irony, though, is that my questions and doubts about my Mennonite beliefs were clarified by a man who is not and has never been a Mennonite. He also made me realize that being a pacifist does not mean much if you do nothing about it—as in his title, being a pacifist means being "engaged" in some way, whether it is missions, conserving water or energy at home, recycling or something else.

Thinking that this paper could be extremely helpful to others with the same questions I have, I passed it around. A church member who has been a Mennonite all his life commented that it was full of big words and gobbledygook. All he got out of it was "love your enemies," and he didn't understand why John didn't just say that and leave it there. I'm glad his faith allows that to be enough for him, but I needed more.

I now believe the Mennonite principle of pacifism is indeed based on biblical principles and is the will of God for all who belong to him. It is also my prayer that we can work on understanding pacifism better ourselves so that we can teach and explain with clarity what it means to the coming generations. I want my son to understand why I will not buy him plastic grenades or toy tanks. I don't want to just say, "No, we don't play with things like that at our house" and leave it at that. I want him to understand the reasons and learn to incorporate them in his life even now. I hope we can somehow—in church, in school and at home—find a way to enable the coming generations of Mennonites to thoroughly understand and articulate what and why they believe much earlier in life than I did.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **Where should we put the baby?**—Dorothy Nickel Friesen
- **Africans and Americans model faith for each other**—Ryan Miller

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

MCC works in Iraq through its partners

'No one knows' what advice to give North Americans, says MCC administrator.

Dula

Weaver

When it comes to solutions for the problems in Iraq, the administrator most connected to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs in that war-torn country has no answers.

"The problem with Iraq is that the tribal structure has been decimated by the politics of the West," Peter Dula said in a Nov. 8 interview in Amman, Jordan. "Thoughtful people don't know what to say about Iraq anymore. No one knows what the helpful advocacy line is."

Dula lives in Amman and works out of MCC's Middle East office there. From that vantage Dula has unique opportunities to listen to Iraqi perspectives about the war.

"If you speak with Iraqis," Dula said, "they will say yes [they want U.S. troops to stay], but they will immediately start qualifying: 'Leave the cities, stop offensive operations and do not have a permanent presence.' "

Dula, a native of Lancaster, Pa., said he has enormous respect for the antiwar movement in the United States. But he also is skeptical about the motives of some antiwar activists.

"They hate [President] Bush more than they love Iraq," Dula said. "At least I would take a political position on Iraq aside from a position in the [U.S] culture wars."

Dula described one specific problem in the way the United States is making decisions about Iraq. Although evangelical Christian churches in the Arab world are in close conversation with the missionary community, those Christians are neglected by policy makers in the United States.

He pointed to a group of Iraqis living in Virginia who have been ignored by U.S. officials as an example.

In anticipation of the time when MCC can enter Iraq, it is establishing partnerships with other nongovernment organizations (NGOs) working inside the war-torn country. Dula declined to name those partners for security reasons, but described the assessments they are completing.

"At enormous risk to themselves, they brought out pictures of burned-out hospitals," Dula said. "They refuse to take [U.S. military] coalition money but are willing to accept MCC money. They are laying the groundwork for other larger NGOs, most of whom are afraid to go into the country."

Among the partner projects MCC supports is an after-school program in Baghdad for 80 students who are learning English. In Mosul, MCC supports a Chaldean convent that is running a shelter for women from all backgrounds.

Alain Epp Weaver, country co-representative for MCC's Middle East programs, said since the fall of the Baathist regime in Iraq, new organizations have begun forming to meet civil needs.

"We want [any new] civil structure to emerge from the culture," Weaver said. "Maybe they won't be NGOs."

Weaver also said that MCC is sensitive about working too closely with mosques in Iraq because of the possibility of violence and because "mosque members may be helped first."

According to Dula and Weaver, MCC observes a strict code of conduct ascribed for international NGOs; the code requires them to remain neutral in political matters and first build "local capacity." MCC programs in Jordan (see page 16) serve as a model for any future activity in Iraq.

In the meantime, MCC continues to provide material aid to Iraqis in need. This includes 4,200 relief kits and 24,000 school kits. The relief kits will be distributed to Iraqis displaced by urban warfare. Some have moved in with family members and others are living in tents or in the streets. The school kits will go to children in low-income neighborhoods in Baghdad.—*Everett J. Thomas*

We want civil structures [in Iraq] to emerge from the culture.
—Alain Epp Weaver

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Harder appointed president at Bluffton

Has served in administrative, teaching roles at the Ohio university since 2001

Bluffton (Ohio) University's board of trustees has announced the appointment of James M. Harder as the university's ninth president, beginning with the 2006-07 academic year. He will replace Lee Snyder, who will retire in July 2006 after 10 years of service.

Very few persons have contributed as much to the formation of Mennonite Church USA as Jim Harder.
—Jim Schrag

Harder has served as Bluffton's vice president for institutional planning since 2003 and special assistant to the president and professor of economics since 2001. Prior to his positions at Bluffton, he was a professor of economics and business at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., for 11 years.

During his four and a half years at Bluffton, Harder has overseen the institution's strategic planning processes and led the integrated marketing team that developed a new approach for communicating Bluffton's distinctive qualities.

He also led the administrative team that developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for the transition from Bluffton College to Bluffton University that occurred on Aug. 1, 2004.

"We are grateful for the careful discernment and thorough process of the search committee," says Morris Stutzman, chairperson of the Bluffton University board of trustees, "and pleased to have a person of Dr. Harder's experience and ability answer the call to serve as Bluffton's next president."

"Bluffton has contributed significantly to the lives of its students, to the church and to society in its 106-year history," Harder said upon his appointment. "I look forward to this opportunity to work within the Bluffton University community to further advance its distinctive educational mission."

Bluffton is one of five colleges and universities in the United States affiliated with Mennonite Church USA through its education agency.

"Mennonite Education Agency commends Bluffton University," says Carlos Romero, executive director of MEA, "on its selection of Jim Harder as its next president. He has been a distinguished leader in both church and academic settings for many years. His commitment to Mennonite education, his significant and far-reaching experience and his strong Christian faith will serve Bluffton and Mennonite Church USA well."

Harder received his bachelor's degrees in history and economics/business administration from Bethel College in 1978 and his master's and doctorate in economics from the University of Notre Dame in 1990.

Harder's academic specialization is global economic and social change, especially as it relates to developing countries and to environmental issues. His writing has been published in numerous periodicals and as chapters in edited volumes. Speaking engagements have regularly taken him to locations in both the United States and Canada.

Harder has an extensive history with Mennonite Church USA, having served the denomination in various capacities. Since 1999, he has been a member of the denomination's Executive Board. He serves on that body's executive committee and chairs the board's resources committee.

"Very few persons have contributed as much to the formation of Mennonite Church USA as Jim Harder," says Jim Schrag, executive director of Mennonite Church USA.

"His knowledge, wisdom and enthusiasm for this new venture in our generation have greatly influenced who we are as a church and who we are becoming," Schrag says.

Harder is married to Karen Klassen Harder, a professor of economics and business at Bluffton and chair of the board of Mennonite Central Committee.

They have two high school age children, Annalisa and John, and are members of First Mennonite Church in Bluffton.—*Robin Bowlus of Bluffton University*

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Mennonite Central Committee

Brenneman proposed for Goshen College

Pastor, Old Testament professor introduced as 'candidate of choice' Nov. 18.

James Brenneman was introduced as the Goshen (Ind.) College "candidate of choice" for president at a special convocation on Nov. 18. No timetable has been announced about when the college's board of overseers or Mennonite Education Agency will act on his nomination.

Brenneman is the founding lead pastor of Pasadena (Calif.) Mennonite Church. Since 1992 he has also served on the faculty at Episcopal Theological School at Claremont (Calif.) in Old Testament scholarship and as an adjunct faculty member at Claremont School of Theology. Since 1995, he has been an adjunct professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif.

"The journey that has brought us together for this exciting day," said Goshen College board chair Virgil Miller, "has been one of progressive, unfolding steps in a thorough process of discernment."

Brenneman said that the opportunities and mentors he found during formative years at Goshen—he was the first in his family to attend college—were pivotal in his "young adult formation, vocational choices, future ministry and worldview." He described how professors helped him explore the intersection of intellectual and spiritual life and consider his future commitment to the church.

"Goshen College was revolutionary in my life, especially in encouraging my passion for learning and my spiritual transformation, so I am particularly prepared to promote the college's Christ-centered mission," Brenneman said.

Rick Stiffney, chair of the presidential search committee and vice chair of the Goshen College board of directors, officially introduced Brenneman to the campus and said the search committee was unanimous in supporting Brenneman's candidacy.

"In considering the candidate profile that was created after talking with a broad range of people, we sought a proven leader who demonstrates creative intellect, a collaborative management style and a passion for Anabaptist education," Stiffney said.

After the college board of directors acts on Brenneman's appointment, the Mennonite Education Agency (MEA) will respond to their action.

"Jim Brenneman is both an academic and a seasoned church leader at many levels," said search committee member and MEA executive director Carlos Romero. "He would bring to Goshen College the mind of a scholar, the vision and determination of a leader and the heart of a pastor."

Brenneman graduated in 1977 from Goshen with an interdisciplinary degree combining Bible, biology and natural science. He went on to attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and completed a master of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1982. At Claremont Graduate University, he earned a master of arts degree in religious studies in 1991 and a doctorate, with a focus in Hebrew Bible and Old Testament studies, in 1994.

Brenneman is the author of *On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Lessons from the Book of Deuteronomy*, (Herald Press, 2004) and *Canons in Conflict: Negotiating Texts in True and False Prophesy* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Ordained in 1986, Brenneman served on the pastoral leadership commission of the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference in 1990 and on the Council on Faith, Life and Strategy for the (former) Mennonite Church.

From 1991 to 2002, he was president of the Center for Anabaptist Leadership and School of Urban Ministry in Los Angeles and is again serving in that role for the organization.

Brenneman and his wife, Terri J. Plank Brenneman, have one son, Quinn.—*Jodi Beyeler of Goshen College*

> **[Brenneman] would bring ... the mind of a scholar, the vision and determination of a leader and the heart of a pastor.**
> **—Carlos Romero**

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MEDA convention focuses on pandemic

Member contributions grew 19 percent last year; produced surplus of $281,000

Privileged countries are not doing their part in the global fight against AIDS, and "we can count the losses in millions of lives," says Stephen Lewis, United Nations' special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa.

The pandemic's "ferocious assault on the human condition" is "turning countries into cemeteries," he told the annual convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Nov. 5 in Whistler, B.C.

The disease, driven by "predatory male behavior," is ravaging the continent's productive generation between the ages of 15 and 49. As a result, grandmothers have become "the heroes of Africa," said Lewis, formerly deputy executive director of UNICEF and Canada's ambassador to the United Nations. "They bury their adult children and then look after their orphaned grandchildren."

Despite this grim scenario, Lewis sees glimmers of hope as drugs have become more affordable and testing and treatment more widely available. There even has been headway in the search for a simple AIDS microbicide for women, he said.

Lewis said $8 billion will be spent this year to combat HIV/AIDS, but the amount needed keeps rising, and the wealthiest countries lag behind their commitments.

"This year, for the first time since the cold war, we will spend $1 trillion on armaments," he said, "and we cannot raise a microscopic smidgen of that to rescue the human condition."

The annual convention is the major public event for MEDA, an association of 3,000 business and professional people whose dual aim is to promote faith and work integration and to devise business-oriented solutions to poverty. Some 440 people attended the Nov. 3-6 gathering.

CEO Allan Sauder said the convention theme of "Create a Better World" was seldom more fitting than in 2005.

"A year that began with a growing awareness of the horror of the tsunami, that saw the devastation of hurricanes and earthquakes and that ends with the prospect of a global pandemic of avian flu is surely a year when we need God's message of hope and new creation," Sauder said.

MEDA, he added, had been part of that hope through programs of economic development and commercial delivery of health care that benefited 1.9 million families last year.

These included microcredit for small business, production and marketing help for subsistence farmers, safety and educational ventures for children forced to work in family businesses, and a huge program in Tanzania to prevent malaria with mosquito nets.

Sauder said MEDA's programs, totalling $11 million last year, were made possible by member contributions that grew by 19 percent to $1.7 million. This revenue leveraged government funds, contracts and other earnings by a factor of more than five to one and produced a net surplus of $281,000 for the year.

"Without your $1.7 million contributions we would not be able to take on the creative and often risky work that we do," Sauder told members.

Next year's MEDA convention will be held Nov. 2-5 in Tampa Bay, Fla. *—Wally Kroeker for MEDA*

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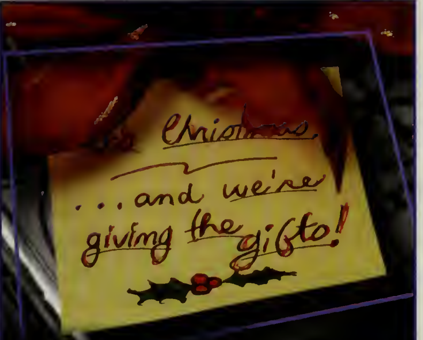
Conrad Grebel University College is a Mennonite church-affiliated college on the campus of the University of Waterloo, with an undergraduate teaching program in the liberal arts, and a graduate teaching program in theological studies. Candidates should possess a PhD or ThD in Biblical Studies with research and teaching emphasis in Old Testament. The position will include both undergraduate and graduate teaching. The ability to teach in another area of the humanities or social sciences is desirable. Applicants should be sympathetic to the traditions and beliefs of the Mennonite church.

Applications should contain a cover letter detailing teaching and research expertise, a curriculum vitae, names of three referees, and other evidence of the candidate's suitability for the position.

The deadline for applications is January 9, 2006. Please direct all inquiries and applications to the Academic Dean, Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3G6. 519-885-0220, x265 cgucacad@uwaterloo.ca For more information about the College and its programs, visit the website at: **http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca.**

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed first of all to Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada. Conrad Grebel University College is committed to principles of employment equity.



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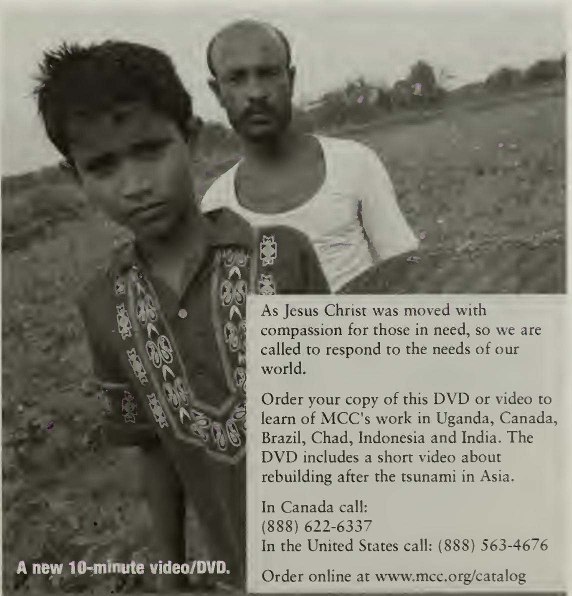
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CALENDAR

5th Biennial Mennonite Senior Sports Classic, June 15-17, 2006, **Goshen College** campus. Sponsored by Mennonite Association of Retired Persons (MARP), the Senior Sports Classic will include approximately 40 different competitive events and several new events that will be open to walk-on participants. Anyone 50 years and older by July 1, 2006, may compete in as many events as they can schedule during the three-day period. Registration forms will be sent to MARP members and other interested individuals in January. For more information, contact Stuart W. Showalter at 269-353-8515 or stuarts@goshen.edu.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *Mediation Skills Training Institute*, March 6-10, 2006, Glendale, Ariz. For more information call 630-627-0507 or visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *Leadership and Anxiety in the Church*, March 15, 2006, Winston-Salem, N.C. For more information call 630-627-0507 or visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *Healthy Congregations*, March 24-25, 2006, Santa Ana, Calif. For more information call 630-627-0507 or visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, *Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation*, March 28-30, 2006, Kansas City, Mo. For more information call 630-627-0507 or visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Brassington, Caimbrya Lea, Aug. 31, to Daren and Andrea Freeburne Brassington, Aberdeen, Idaho.

Brubaker, Kellon Matthew, Sept. 28, to Curtis and Christine Martin Brubaker, Mifflinburg, Pa.

Buller, Lucy Dianne, Oct. 17, to Tim and Rachel Epp Buller, Newton, Kan.

Burkholder, Magdalena Hertzler, Oct. 16, to Alan and Susan Hertzler Burkholder, Cleveland, Ohio.

Clemens, Evelyn Rose, Sept. 6, to Quentin and Rachel O'Brien Clemens, Westmont, Ill.

Freeburne, Brianna Jane, Sept. 18, to Chris and Rebecca Ledford Freeburne, Aberdeen, Idaho.

Gingerich, Emily Jo, Oct. 24, to Merlin and Rhoda Mullet Gingerich, Millersburg, Ohio.

Hege, Sabina Elsa, Sept. 21, to Daniel and Katarina Oladottir Hege, Syracuse, N.Y.

High, Genevieve Grace, Oct. 26, to David and Margaret Weaver High, Lancaster, Pa.

Hipps, Harper MacLaren, Oct. 5, to Shane and Andrea Berry Hipps, Phoenix, Ariz.

Hively, Cole Weston, Sept. 30, to Les and Amy Rogers Hively, Lagrange, Ind.

Hofer, Dominic Jaden, Oct. 8, to Mark and Joyce Hochstedler Hofer, Millersburg, Ind.

Horst, Landon Peter, Aug. 17, to Doug and Becky Steiner Horst, Birmingham, Ala.

Krabill, Joseph Andrew, Oct. 24, to Tim and Dawn Klesner Krabill, Iowa City, Iowa.

Martin, Kyle Asher, Nov. 9, to Stefan and Heidi Swartzentruber Martin, Flourtown, Pa.

Risner, Jonas Gilbert, Oct. 4, to John and Rachel Risner, Kenton, Ohio.

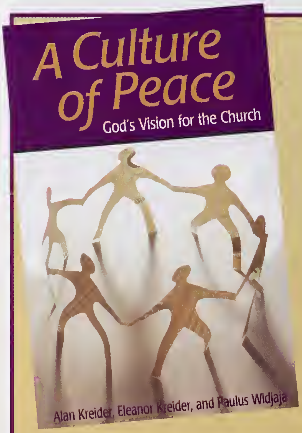
Unzicker, Jacob Roger, Oct. 7, to David Unzicker and Jenelle Basinger, St. Louis, Mo.

Yoder, Sophie Marie Pimentel, Oct. 3, to Lawson and Mary Pimental Yoder, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Zachariasen, Torrie Jenika, Oct. 24, to Preston and Paige Hofer Zachariasen, Freeman, S.D.

MARRIAGES

Geiser/Ickes: Randy Geiser, Kidron, Ohio, and Amy Ickes, Kidron, Aug. 27 at Sonnenburg Mennonite Church, Kidron.


A Culture of Peace
God's Vision for the Church
Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider, and Paulus Widjaja

"A clear, winsome articulation!"
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Geiser/Ressler: Benjamin Geiser, Kidron, Ohio, and Stephanie Ressler, Kidron, Sept. 24 at Camp Buckeye, Beach City, Ohio.

Gulley/Freed: Josh Gulley, Pittsburgh, Pa., and Amy Freed, Souderton, Pa., Aug. 13 at Indian Creek Church of the Brethren, Harleysville, Pa.

Hicks/Nelsen: Tommy Hicks, Lincoln, Neb., and Shawney Hicks, Dorchester, Neb., Oct. 22 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford, Neb.

DEATHS

Abrahams, Bill, 84, Newton, Kan., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Marna Voth Abrahams. Parents: George and Helen Richert Abrahams. Children: Marnette Hatchett, Carol, Russ, Rod, Ryan; eight grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 3 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton.

Bontrager, Fannie L., 91, Beach City, Ohio, died Oct. 24. Spouse: Roman M. Bontrager. Parents: Levi and Lizzie Schlabach Miller. Children: Ella Nafziger, Mary, Roy, Andy, Ron; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Longenecker Mennonite Church, Winesburg, Ohio.

Brubacher, Maria Willer, 83, Kalona, Iowa, died Oct. 24. Spouse: Richard Brubacher. Parents: Jacob and Katharina Remple Willer. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Kalona Mennonite Church.

Burkey, Erma Rediger, 91, Milford, Neb., died Oct. 19. Spouse: Elmer Burkey (deceased). Parents: Peta and Lena Rediger. Children: Don, Jane Boden; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Bellwood Mennonite Church, Milford.

Burkholder, Paul Leonard, 80, Fairview, Alberta, died Oct. 2. Spouse: Doris Stalter Burkholder. Parents: Joseph and Adeline Lauber Burkholder. Children: Timothy, Owen, Luanna Friesen, Wyonne Weber, Nancy Friesen, Fern Diener, Stanley; 20 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7 at St. Thomas More Catholic Church, Fairview, Alberta.

Crossgrove, Patricia Blosser, 55, Wauseon, Ohio, died Nov. 6. Spouse: Ronald Crossgrove. Parents: Noah and Eldora Witmer Blosser. Funeral: Nov. 11 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Delp, Samuel M., 83, Telford, Pa., died Oct. 30. Spouse: Arlene Allebach Delp. Parents: Samuel and Anna Mininger Delp. Children: Donald A., Dennis A., Susan A. Derstine; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 4 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Derstine, Norman H., 85, Harrisonburg, Va., died Nov. 4. Spouse: Virginia Martin Derstine. Parents: Clarence and Mamie Histand Derstine. Children: Jerry, Jean Cubbage; four grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 7 at Park View Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Greider, Joseph A., 73, West Liberty, Ohio, died Oct. 3. Spouse: Elaine Reimer Greider. Parents: Joseph A. and Grace Troyer Greider. Children: Susette Litwiller, Herm, Will; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 5 at South Union Mennonite Church, West Liberty.

Guntz, John B., Jr., 89, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 21. Spouse: Katie Freed Guntz. Parents: John and Elizabeth Bean Guntz. Children: Wilma Hathaway, Dolores Hathaway, J. Lester Guntz, Anna Kathryn Frederick, Miriam Leatherman, Merle, David; 15 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 26 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Hershberger, Iola, 90, Phoenix, Ariz., died Oct. 2. Spouse: Paul Hershberger (deceased). Parents: John and Susan Rediger Hershberger. Children: Connie Stoltzfus, Arlen, Marlin; seven grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 7 at Trinity Mennonite Church, Glendale, Ariz.

To submit event information to *The Mennonite*, log on at www.TheMennonite.org and use the "For the Record" button to access our on-line forms. You can also submit by email, fax or mail:

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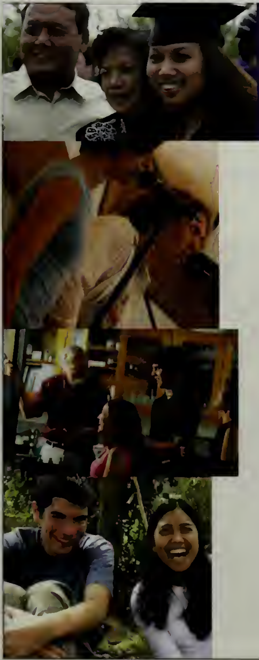
•fax 574-535-6050

•1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794



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GOSHEN
COLLEGE

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org. To receive a paper copy of the obituary form, call 574-535-6053.

Jantz, Melvin A., 90, Moundridge, Kan., died Oct. 28. Spouse: Sadie M. Jantz (deceased). Parents: Alfred and Susie Redger Jantz. Children: Dwight, Merle, Royce, Mary Ford; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge.

Kempf, Lucille Kuhns, 85, Kalona, Iowa, died Sept. 19. Spouse: Ervin H. Kempf (deceased). Parents: Henry and Maggie Ernst Kuhns. Children: Darrel, Ervin, Dennis, Janice Barrett, Lydia Martin; 21 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 22 at Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Landis, Lydia S. Hackman, 89, Delaware, Ohio, died Oct. 25. Spouse: Paul F. Landis (deceased). Parents: John and Katie Stauffer Hackman. Child: Linda Raber; two grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 29 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Lechlitner, Carl, 73, Elkhart, Ind., died Nov. 2. Spouse: Colleen Penland Lechlitner. Parents: Charles and Cora Lechlitner. Children: Michael, Douglas, Debra Martin; six grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Lehman, Vesta Metzler, 85, Goshen, Ind., died Oct. 25. Spouse: Verl O. Lehman. Parents: Forest and Vera Holdeman Metzler. Children: Larry, Jean Moyer, Carol Lehman Kampen, Ruth Ann Yoder, David; 12 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 28 at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship, Goshen.

Loucks, Evelyn, 87, Elkhart, Ind., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Lowell Loucks. Parents: Floyd and Sadie Canen. Child: Sharon Stutzman; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Olive Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Mack, Lois Sheeler, 77, Royersford, Pa., died Sept. 4 of heart failure. Spouse: Abram Mack. Parents: Paul and Katie Good Sheeler. Children: Donna Shenk, Glenda Childs, Daryl, Laverne, Sylvia Shive, Marsha Freed; seven grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 8 at Vincent Mennonite Church, Spring City, Pa.

Magrabi, Francis Marie, 77, Wellman, Iowa, died Sept. 19. Parents: Warren and Ethel Raffety Kisner. Funeral: Sept. 23 at Wellman (Iowa) Mennonite Church.

Martin, Amanda, 89, St. Jacobs, Ont., died Oct. 31. Parents: Simeon and Barbara Snyder Martin. Funeral: Nov. 3 at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Miller, Bert (Albert), 75, Sarasota, Fla., died Oct. 15. Spouse: Darlene Neuhauser. Children: Kim Shank, Crystal Jenkins, Rocky, Roger; 13 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota.

Schmell, Wilmer, 83, Souderton, Pa., died Oct. 13. Spouse: Jean Moyer Schmell. Children: Judith Gerber, Mary Jane Crockett, Michael; nine grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Blooming Glen (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Schertz, Joan Weaver, 87, Flanagan, Ill., died Oct. 17 of cancer. Spouse: LaVerne Schertz (deceased). Parents: Rev. William B. and Fanny Stoltzfus Weaver. Children: Marilyn, Glenn, Donita Herr; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 22 at Prairieview Mennonite Church, Flanagan.

Schmidt, Henry B., 94, Goessel, Kan., died Nov. 1. Spouse: Esther Klassen Schmidt (deceased). Parents: Henry and Eva Hiebert Schmidt. Children: Kenneth, Linford, Alfred; eight grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Tabor Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.

Schrock, Dorothy Troyer Burkett, 96, Hesston, Kan., died Nov. 3. Spouse: (1st) Leo M. Burkett (deceased), (2nd) E. Freedley Schrock (deceased). Parents: Menno Z. and Susan B. Miller Troyer. Children: Jim Burkett, David Burkett, Mary Friesen; step-children Marvin, Ed, Dorothy Kratz, Eunice Munn. Funeral: Nov. 6 at Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston.

Short, Katherine Stamm, 89, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 4. Spouse: Harold J. Short (deceased). Parents: Adolph and Ida Short Stamm. Children: Gerald, William, Delvin, Jerry, David, Donald, Harold, Betty Timgley; 25 grandchildren; 25 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 8 at Central Mennonite Church, Archbold.

Wenger, Warren Martin, 84, Souderton, Pa., died Aug. 30. Spouse: Carrie Tyson Wenger. Parents: Aaron and Martha Rock Wenger. Children: Larry R., Galen R., Karl M.; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 1 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Yutzy, William D., 74, Arthur, Ill., died Oct. 28. Spouse: Jacquelin Yutzy. Parents: Dan and Lillie Slagle Yutzy. Children: Billy Wayne, Debra Lynn Rodebaugh, Vickie Elaine Snyder, Dawn Denise Kerchner; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 1 at Arthur Mennonite Church.

The board, faculty, families and churches of
CENTRAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
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Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center, located in North Central Illinois, seeks passionate ***full-time program director*** starting by January 2006. Responsible for programming for all ages, including: summer and winter youth camps, Adventure Education, and other programs. Qualifications include active membership in the Mennonite church, experience in Christian camp ministry and general skills in the areas of planning, staffing, Bible, recreation, adventure and administration. Salary and benefits package provided. Send resumé attention Doc Johnson, 9301 1575 East St., Tiskilwa, IL 61368; email doc@mennohaven.com or call 800-636-6642.

The Greeley (Colo.) Mennonite Church is seeking an ***intentional interim pastor*** to lead the 40- to 50-member church into the next step of its journey. The church is a member of Mountain States Mennonite Conference, Mennonite Church USA. A strong Mennonite theological background is preferred. Applicant should possess skills in processing issues with congregation, pastoral care and worship service participation. Contact Willard Kendall, Congregational Chairperson, 970-330-6054 or kwskendall53@wmconnect.com.

The Council on Church and Media seeks a ***part-time executive director*** to bring creative administration to organizational initiatives to fulfill CCM's mission of enhancing connections and providing professional development for communicators from peace church traditions. Primary responsibilities include working with the CCM Executive Committee to develop and implement vision, priorities and strategy for recruiting and retaining membership; coordinating logistical and program planning and promotion of CCM annual conference; oversee development and maintenance of CCM Web site; edit CCM materials and maintain CCM annual budget. For more information, contact Tony Krabill at 574-294-2424 or churchandmedia@mennoniteusa.org.

Brementowne Manor, a HUD-subsidized apartment facility for elderly and disabled in Tinley Park, Ill., is seeking ***live-in volunteer(s)***, to be available when office is closed. Stipend, rent-free apartment and health insurance included. Contact Jim Durnbaugh at brementowne1982@covad.net or 708-429-4088 or Rick Martin at rmartin101@comcast.net or 847-492-1458.

Goshen College has openings for a ***full-time assistant professor in special education*** to begin July 2006. For more information and to apply, visit the specific position announcement on the Goshen College Web page http://www.goshen.edu/employment/.

***FT lead pastor*, Mountville Mennonite Church**, membership 200, small-town community near Lancaster, Pa. Contact Nelson Shertzer, Chair, search and discernment committee, 97 Charlestown Road, Washington Boro, PA 17582, 717-684-0495.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is inviting applications for the full-time position of ***director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee***. The director will provide overall coordination and direction to the heritage and history work of the Historical Committee and develop program and vision that will enhance the life and spirit of Mennonite Church USA.

Responsibilities include interpreting and telling the church's story, initiating and coordinating history and heritage programs, fund-raising, supervising staff and archives operations in Goshen, Ind., and in North Newton, Kan., managing a budget, networking with regional heritage organizations and overseeing/editing the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

Qualifications: commitment to Mennonite Church USA and its mission; passion for the church's stories; visionary; storytelling ability, strong communication skills, in person and through writing; management and supervisory skills; fund-raising experience/ability or willingness to learn; ability to inspire and motivate; equally at home with the various heritage streams and ethnic/racial groups of Mennonite Church USA.

Send resumé with references to Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen IN 46526.

Interviews will begin Feb. 1, 2006, until the position is filled.

Call for papers: For the conference "Holding Fast to the Confession of our Hope: The Confession of Faith Ten Years Later," a call for papers is extended to pastors, educators, church leaders, sociologists and people of other disciplines. The conference will take place at **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary**, Elkhart, Ind., June 8-10, 2006. The purpose of the study is to describe and assess how Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective has functioned in the church and how well it has guided the faith and practice of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada. Send paper proposals to Barbara Nelson Gingerich, bngingerich@ambs.edu, by Feb. 1, 2006. The conference is sponsored by the Church Leadership Center and Institute of Mennonite Studies of AMBS with Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network and Anabaptist Sociology and Anthropology Association.

***Full-time senior pastor*: St. John Mennonite Church** in Pandora, Ohio, is looking for a senior pastor to shepherd a congregation of over 600 and to implement the vision statement set forth before the church. Direct duties include preaching, overseeing worship and prayer. Searching for someone gifted in these areas: pastoring/shepherding, exhortation, teaching and administration. Masters of theology, pastoral experience in a multistaffed church of 10 years plus highly desired. Profile of congregation and vision statement available upon request. Applicants may apply to Mark Yoder at myoder@wcoil.com or call the church office 419-384-3680.

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Advertising space in *The Mennonite* is available to congregations, conferences, businesses, and churchwide boards and agencies of Mennonite Church USA. Cost for one-time classified placement is $1.15 per word, minimum of $30. Display space is also available.

To place an ad in *The Mennonite*, call 800-790-2498 and ask for Kristene Miller, or email Advertising@TheMennonite.org.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a thriving, multifaceted retreat center affiliated with the Mennonite church, seeks a committed Christian for the key position of ***housekeeping manager***, to oversee all cleaning operations plus housekeeping, laundry and custodial staff. Applicant must have excellent communication skills, experience in hospitality, cleaning operations, supervision, scheduling and basic computer skills. Salary and liberal benefits package provided commensurate with training/experience. On-camp housing may be available. Located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania; visit www.sprucelake.org. Send resumé to Director of Operations, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505, ext. 118; fax 570-595-0328; email operations@sprucelake.org.

Full-time associate pastor: **St. John Mennonite Church** in Pandora, Ohio, is looking for a full-time associate pastor to lead staff and laypeople in a large ministry-based church of over 600. The duties include implementing vision statement in ministry areas, develop and execute annual ministry plan, provide accountability for ministry team members, encourage and raise up new leaders from within the church body for specific ministry teams. Looking for someone gifted in these areas: administration/leadership, ministry/serving, pastoring/shepherding, teaching and wisdom. Masters of theology and/or experience in church/parachurch administration highly desired. Profile of congregation and vision statement available upon request. Applicants may apply to Mark Yoder at myoder@wcoil.com or call the church office 419-384-3680.

Eastern Mennonite University announces ***full-time, continuing faculty position in composition and rhetoric*** beginning fall 2006. Ph.D. required, with preference for candidates with secondary expertise in the history and grammar of English or early American literature. The new faculty member will teach classes in composition, grammar and literature and will serve as a writing consultant to the Academic Support Center for a total of 12 hours each semester. Other responsibilities include advising, service and scholarship. Applicants must support EMU's mission as an Anabaptist-Mennonite Christian institution. Send letter of application and dossier to Marie S. Morris, Vice President and Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. Review begins immediately. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. Applications will be acknowledged by letter. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

Mennonite Heritage Chorale is offering several ***Classical A Cappella CD albums*** for sale. "What a Saviour" features songs of Christ's death and resurrection. "A Legacy of Our Heritage" is a collection of hymns and gospel songs. "A Family Christmas" is a compilation of Christmas carols by the Fox family. For more information, phone 717-627-0812 or email mhc-em@juno.com.

Service opportunity. **The International Guest House**, a service project of Allegheny Conference in Washington, D.C., is seeking ***two couples and a single individual to serve in voluntary service assignments***. One couple is needed immediately for a three-month term and the other couple is being recruited for a six-month term beginning in January 2006. The single individual will begin a one-year assignment in December 2005. For more information and to apply, contact International Guest House, 1441 Kennedy St. NW, Washington, DC 20011; phone 202-726-5808; email igh-dc@juno.com.

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Central Christian School, located in Kidron, Ohio, is seeking a ***new lead administrator***. Central Christian is committed to achieving each of its five distinctive goals: teaching biblical values, practicing Christian discipleship, creating a Christ-centered community, promoting academic excellence and encouraging a faith commitment to Christ and the church. Candidates should possess the following qualities: faithfully committed to the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of Christianity; called and gifted to be a visionary and progressive spiritual leader of a community of faculty, staff and students; believes in the mission of Central Christian School and works with the supportive constituency of the churches, business community, families of students and local communities to achieve that mission; a master's degree in an education-related field.

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Additional information can be found at http://www.centralchristian.k12.oh.us/. Nominations and/or letters of application with resumé may be submitted by email to leadership-search@central-christian-school.com or by mail to Shirley Hochstetler, P.O. Box 136, Kidron, Ohio, 44636. CCS is an equal opportunity employer.

Hinkletown Mennonite School is seeking a ***visionary administrator*** to lead the school into a new era of providing a Christian education to students in Northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. HMS is a K-8 school that offers a quality academic education within the context of an Anabaptist interpretation of the Christian faith. Interested people are invited to contact Kristine Sauder by Feb. 1, 2006. Please address communications to 464 E. Maple Grove Road, Narvon, PA 17555. Phone 717-445-9215 or email ksauder@frontiernet.net.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following position beginning August 2006: ***physics/physical science instructor***. Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org

Bluffton University is accepting applications for the position of ***regional development officer***. Responsibilities include cultivating and soliciting gifts from alumni and friends of Bluffton University living in an assigned geographical area. Solicitations include annual gifts, major gifts, planned gifts and bequest gifts. Requirements: A bachelor's degree is required and a graduate degree or relevant professional experience preferred. Excellent verbal and written communication skills and the aptitude to develop proficiency with fund-raising software are essential. The ability to work both independently and in a team environment is necessary.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To apply, please send a cover letter, resumé and a list of three references to Julie Krupp, Director of Human Resources, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817; fax 419-358-3323; email kruppj@bluffton.edu.

Bluffton University welcomes applications from all qualified applicants who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and wholly endorse Christian higher education in a liberal arts environment. AA/EOE. Members of under-represented groups are encouraged to apply.

Four new children's books from Good Books ($16 each) are **On That Christmas Night** by Mary Joslin, illustrated by Helen Cann, which retells the traditional Christmas story; **Ituku's Christmas Journey** by Elena Pasquali, illustrated by Dubravka Kolanovic, in which an Arctic boy leaves his northern home to search for a newborn king; **Snow Friends** by M. Christina Butler, illustrated by Tina Macnaughton, in which animal friends build a snowman; **The Sea Mice and the Stars** by Kenneth Steven, illustrated by Louise Ho, in which two young sea mice gather stars to keep sea mice safe.

Ambassador Families: Equipping Your Kids to Engage Popular Culture by Mitali Perkins (Brazos Press, 2005, $14.99) compares raising kids in a pop culture world to being ambassadors in a foreign country. Children should be devoted first to their homeland (Christian faith) but want to reach out to and understand their host culture (pop culture).

On Earth as It Is in Advertising: Moving from Commercial Hype to Gospel Hope by Sam Van Eman (Brazos Press, 2005, $14.99) demonstrates how the "simulated gospel" of advertising perverts and distorts Jesus' radical message of love and compassion.

This Heavy Silence: A Novel by Nicole Mazzarella (Paraclete Press, 2005, $21.95) explores the power of vows we make to others and, more binding, those we make to ourselves. To order call 800-451-5006.

Walk in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino by Joyce Rupp (Orbis Books, 2005, $15) tells of her 47-day, 450-mile pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago in Spain and the lessons she learned.

The Difference a Father Makes by Ed McGlasson (Ampelōn Publishing, 2005, $11.95) claims that dads need to help their children understand what it means to be a man or a woman and uncover the dreams God has placed on their hearts.

Second Wife: Stories and Wisdom from Women Who Have Married Widowers by Martha Denlinger Stahl (Good Books, 2005, $9.99) includes personal stories from the author's experience of marrying in her late 40s as well as from 40 other women who shared a similar experience.

Death and the Rest of Our Life by John Garvey (Eerdmans, 2005, $10) reminds us that the Christian affirmation of the resurrected and transformed body is an essential part of the truth about death's real depths and about what life is finally meant to be.

Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation, edited by William C. Placher (Eerdmans, 2005, $24), gathers excerpts on vocation from the greatest writers of Christian history, with introductions to each by the editor.

Dancing in the Kitchen by Jeanne Lohmann (Fithian Press, 2005, $12) is about transition and discoveries, love and loss, life in and beyond widowhood. Lohmann has published poems in *The Mennonite*.

Monday Marriage: Celebrating the Ordinary by Gerald W. and L. Marlene Kaufman (Herald Press, 2005, $9.99) is about discovering the wonderful things that occur in the daily routines of marriage.

Is It Insensitive to Share Your Faith? Hard Questions About Christian Mission in a Plural World by James R. Krabill (Good Books, 2005, $9.99) takes on thorny and taboo topics, such as, Why do Christians act as though only they are right and everyone else isn't? It explores whether Christians can talk about and live their faith without condemning people who believe otherwise.

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The ascendancy of autonomy

Joseph Kotva

This monthly column, called ACHE (for Anabaptist Center for Healthcare Ethics), has looked at issues of health-care ethics. For more information go to www.anabaptistethics.org. Next month we begin a new column on family life issues.

The phone call annoyed me. The women's group was running an event at the church. I was enjoying an unexpected morning at home. Then the call: An "unusual" woman had wandered in from the street, and the pastor (me) needed to come deal with her.

All the way to church I thought, A room full of competent, gifted women, and I'm needed to deal with one stranger? Once I met "Jenni," I immediately understood the need.

Jenni was severely mentally ill. Indeed, the more I talked with her, the more I realized that Jenni saw, heard and interpreted everything so differently that it was as if she inhabited another world. Jenni had no family, few friends and nowhere to live. She had been staying in a building that leased rooms by the week, but she was out of money. She was convinced that everyone in the building was involved in a conspiracy that involved the government, drugs and aliens.

Several hours of calling various agencies seeking help for Jenni proved fruitless. She needed medical and mental care, but unless she was an immediate, physical threat to herself or others, she could not legally be hospitalized or even medically or psychologically evaluated without her permission. Jenni was unwilling to give that permission, in part because she believed the medical establishment was involved in the conspiracy. In the end, the best that I could do for her was find her a room in a short-term shelter.

> The American obsession with autonomy means we are free to abandon Jenni and thousands like her to the streets.

Jenni did not receive appropriate care due to the American obsession with autonomy and freedom. This obsession is embodied in laws that require Jenni's "informed consent" before she can be evaluated or treated. Jenni's right to autonomy means that she is free to reject needed care, free to be mentally ill, free to be homeless, free to live within her hallucinations.

What does informed consent mean in cases like Jenni's? What kind of freedom and autonomy are we protecting? In truth, the American obsession with autonomy means we are free to abandon Jenni and thousands like her to the streets.

Jenni's case illustrates how our society's dominant values of autonomy and freedom distort moral obligations and appropriate medical care. Such distortions are not limited to the severely mentally ill. For example, when I served on a large hospital's ethics committee, we routinely reviewed cases involving individuals demanding expensive life-extending technology in the name of autonomy. After all, these patients were free to choose their course of treatment, no matter the low chance of success. In such cases, individual appeals to autonomy and freedom usually trumped communal concerns about the justice of distributing scarce resources in such a manner. Autonomy's dominance is also visible when 60-year-old women assert their right to use assisted reproductive technologies to bear children. That dominance is likewise visible when the voters of Oregon claim the freedom to use physician-assisted suicide to personally control when they will die.

Anabaptist-related communities have an opportunity to model a different understanding of autonomy—one that balances individual freedom with the believing community's discernment, convictions and priorities. The Anabaptist legacy includes the practice of mutual discernment and correction. According to Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, "members of the church ... commit themselves to give and receive counsel within the faith community on important matters of doctrine and conduct" (Article 14). Moreover, this mutual discernment, this check on individual autonomy and freedom, is part of our witness to the world. It is one way the church "shows the world a sample of life under the lordship of Christ" (Article 10).

Engaging the faith community in health-care decision-making, especially at the beginning and end of life, is a vital witness to the world. For example, discernment that appeals to the community's convictions regarding trust in God and specific notions of justice may challenge the use of medical technologies in many cases of assisted reproduction and the artificial prolongation of life. Some health-care workers may view such communal involvement as immoral, since it directly challenges autonomy's dominance. Yet the only way to show that autonomy has been overvalued is by witnessing to the alternative with our lives.

Advance directives—"living wills" and "durable powers of attorney in health care"—are usually seen as instruments of autonomy, continuing to assert our desires and will even when we can no longer speak for ourselves. Yet they can provide a creative device for inviting Christian mutuality—one can include the request that decision-makers consult the church. Nowhere is such a creative witness more needed than in health care. TM

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Herald Press Books
A Culture of Peace
Margaret's
Tent of Meeting
Opening the Bible
Light Force

Eleanor Snyder
Director, Faith & Life Resources

Learning can be nourishing
...when you have food for thought.

Eleanor Snyder believes in providing resources that nurture the Christian spirit. In fact, that's one of the primary goals of the Faith & Life Resources division of Mennonite Publishing Network. As the division's director, Eleanor works with a staff of writers, designers and editors to provide the faith-forming resources Mennonite Church USA congregations and leaders need – from the Gather 'Round Sunday school curriculum and Rejoice magazine to vacation Bible school materials, Leader magazine and more.

Teaching and learning tools that carry a unique Anabaptist perspective are critical in the life of our congregations. Mennonite Church USA resources help learners see and understand who we are as Jesus' followers – from age 3 to 103. Because young or old, we all hunger to grow more like Christ.

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Everett J. Thomas

Hope amid fear

The little country of Jordan is showing the world that being attacked generates fear, but reactions to such evil need not be driven by anger. In this example, we found hope.

I was part of a group of Christian journalists that toured Jordan Nov. 5-13. While we were there, suicide bombers attacked three hotels in Amman. One of the hotels, the Hyatt, was across the street from the hotel we used. Our group had left Amman at midday; the bombings happened some seven hours after we left. We learned of the bombings and deaths just as we were sitting down to dinner in a former Bedouin village near Petra, 200 kilometers away. At last count, 60 people died from the attacks, most of them Jordanians.

The attack happened on Nov. 9. Since Jordan uses the British system for dates (day first, then month) and since this was the first major terrorist attack on their country, it literally was Jordan's 9/11. For the next four days, our group was privileged to observe how Jordanians responded.

According to the *Jordan Times,* Jordanian citizen al-Zarqawi masterminded the attack on his own country by recruiting Iraqi suicide bombers. On its Web site, the Al Qaeda group took credit.

"What do they want from us?" was the question first spoken out loud by Ali, our Jordanian guide. He pointed out that Jordan has taken in millions of Palestinian refugees over years; now half the population in Jordan is Palestinian. Furthermore, some 700,000 Iraqis have taken refuge in Jordan from the war in their country. Geographically located in the middle of so many tensions in the Middle East (see map), Jordan has responded to the wars raging around it by offering a place of refuge for those dispossessed of their homes.

Jordanians say they try to be a friend to all. They have also made significant sacrifices. In 1967, Israel took the part of their country that is on the west side of the Jordan River. After years of attempting to get it back through diplomatic channels, Jordan finally signed a peace accord with Israel in 1994.

In this violent and vitriolic region, Jordan has been a bridge-builder. For their efforts, they were attacked by an extremist group wanting to destabilize an Islamic culture that is both hospitable to Christians and accepts responsibility as custodian for so many important biblical sites.

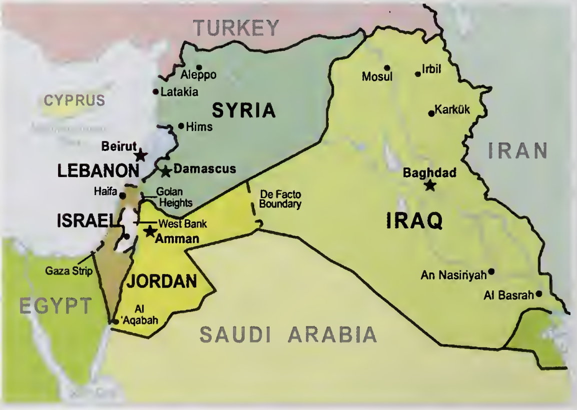
What we experienced in their initial reactions to their 9/11 was strikingly different from the reactions in the United States after Sept. 11, 2001.

Less than 24 hours after the attack our group, sponsored by Associated Church Press and the Jordan Tourism Board, spent an hour with a top Jordanian official. His Excellency Akel Biltaji, former CEO for Royal Jordanian Airlines and now special advisor to King Abdullah, traveled to our hotel instead of joining other officials waiting to greet U.S. Secretary of State Condolessa Rice.

"When our country was attacked on Sept. 11," I said to him, "we responded by wanting to strike back and attack another country. Is that the way Jordan will react?"

"Who would we attack?" he said. "We are a small country and we don't want to fight anyone."

Those who try to make peace and place themselves between warring parties often get hit. In its role as bridge builder and a country of refuge, Jordan has been deeply hurt. Nov. 9, 2005, is Jordan's 9/11. But this small country—physically and culturally in the middle of so much ugliness—is also gracious and welcoming. It is now showing the world another way besides the usual escalation of violence in the Middle East. In doing so, it offers hope alongside our fears.—*ejt*



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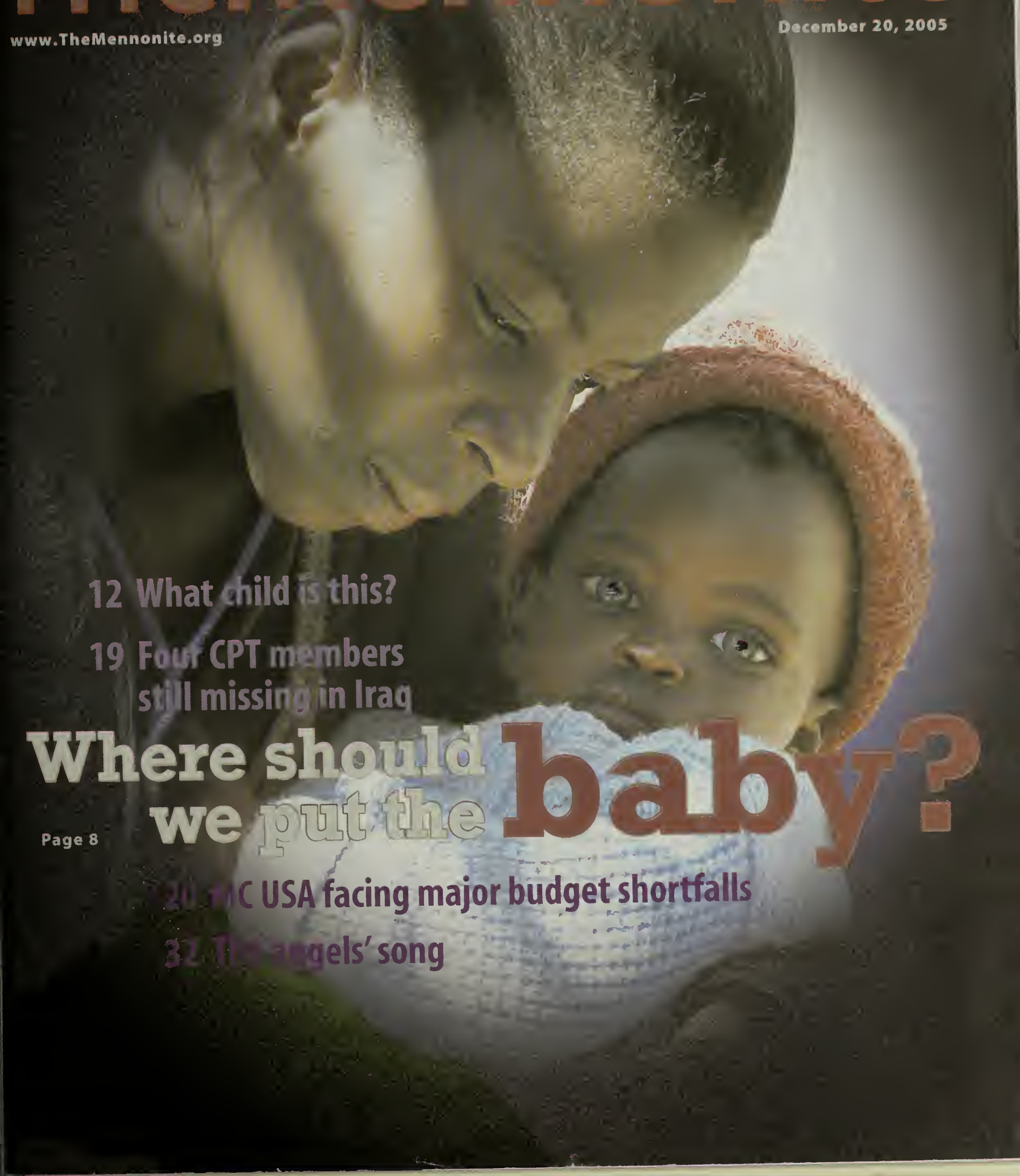

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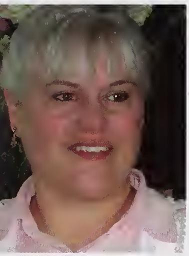
Using our gifts

God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through you.—1 Peter 4:10 (NLT)



Donna Mast is co-pastor of Scottdale (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Conrad, my husband, carried the like-new mailbox into the church sanctuary. It had been a gift from a friend of mine some 15 years earlier. My friend, a gifted artist, had nestled our name into the display of lovely red flowers and green leaves painted across the black backdrop. Not wanting the weather to damage the artwork, we had never used the mailbox in its official capacity. However, we had carefully moved it with us from Ohio to Virginia and then to Pennsylvania.

Now the mailbox was serving as a sermon illustration as Conrad spoke about God's gifts for the church. "Gifts are given to be used," he proclaimed.

It is true that my friend, when visiting, looked around to see if we had put her gift into use yet. And each time, her face registered disappointment. "Don't be so silly. Use it. I can always repaint it or paint you another one," she said.

Does God's face register disappointment when we fail to put into use the gifts so freely bestowed upon us? Do we hear God saying, "Don't be silly. Use that gift. There's more where that came from."

I am as guilty as the next person about hiding the gifts God has given me. I remember full well saying to Conrad during one chapel service sometime in the first month of our seminary years, "Don't tell anybody I can do anything." I was enjoying the contributions of others in our seminary community but felt intimidated. In the midst of such wonderful gifts, my gifts seemed paltry, not good enough to offer.

I was wrong. God doesn't give paltry gifts. Neither does God give gifts simply for the benefit of the one gifted. No. God intends these gifts to be used in such a way that God's generosity can flow through us into the world. It is easier for me to use the gifts God has given me when I remember God's purposes. I am not being boastful or proud when I use the gifts as God intends, for I am using them not for my glory but for God's. When I forget this truth and fall into my old patterns of hiding the gifts God has given, I am guilty of withholding the blessing of God's generosity intended for others.

Does God's face register disappointment when we fail to put into use the gifts so freely bestowed upon us?

How has God gifted you? It may not be the upfront kind of gift that people experience in a Sunday morning worship service. It may be a more behind-the-scenes kind of gift. That doesn't make it any less important or needed. (Neither does a Sunday-morning-worship kind of gift make that gift any more important or needed.) Each gift is needed and necessary for the life of the church. If it were not needed, God would not give it. And if the gift, like our mailbox, becomes a bit weather-worn with use, that's OK, too. God can and will "repaint it or paint you another one." That's the kind of generous God we serve.

Our mailbox now occupies a place of honor outside, near our front porch. Recently a small parishioner from our church was a visitor in our home. As he walked up our sidewalk, we heard him say in his 4-year-old voice, "I remember that mailbox. It came to church." Yes, it is becoming a bit weather-worn, but it is doing the work it was intended to do, and that feels good. TM

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This publication welcomes your letters, either about our content or about issues facing the Mennonite Church USA. Please keep your letters brief—one or two paragraphs—and about one subject only. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. Publication is also subject to space limitations. Send to Letters@TheMennonite.org or mail to Readers Say, *The Mennonite*, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen, IN 46526-4794. Please include your name and address. We will not print letters sent anonymously, though we may withhold names at our discretion.—*Editors*

Blessed by giving

Thank you, Nancy Frey, for exposing extreme poverty—through no fault of those impoverished—in the article "The Face of Poverty" (Nov. 15).

Recently I was shopping for articles for relief kits for Mennonite Central Committee. As I was paying my bill, a member of my congregation reminded me of the many requests we have received lately. In the month of November we supplied Freedom Gate, a halfway house in Reading, Pa., with groceries for prisoners. In addition, a young couple from our church plans to go to Mexico with friends and wants to take articles of clothing and small toys along for people living in poverty there.

We are so blessed to be able to give while living in a land of abundance. We can pray to the Lord to hasten the day when everyone will sit under his own vine and fig tree and no one will make them afraid (Micah 4:4). Also, a time when men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and no one will train for war anymore.—*Ruth Stauffer, New Holland, Pa.*

Hyattsville a blessing

I had the blessing of worshiping with Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church the morning after a majority of delegates in Allegheny Mennonite Conference decided to strip them of voting rights and elected positions in the conference and Mennonite Church USA (see "Hyattsville Church a 'Nonvoting Participant,'" Nov. 15). I support their stand of inclusiveness for all believers who seek to worship with them. I pray for the church, that we might all find a more loving way to relate to each other in the midst of theological and personal differences. As a young woman, I would like to feel my views are welcomed—even if not agreed with—by a body of believers who have much to teach me and learn along with me.—*Celeste Kennel-Shank, Washington, D.C.*

IN THIS ISSUE

In this Christmas issue we focus on the baby—the Christ child in a manger. Dorothy Nickel Friesen (page 8) calls us to place the baby in the arms of a teenager, in the arms of sinners and into a crude manger. Ken Gibble (page 12) reminds us that the baby is "God with us"—Immanuel— in the ordinary parts of our lives. "I hope," Gibble says, "we will watch and listen for God in common places, in the simplest, earthiest things." It was in one of those simple, earthly places that I took the photo of Siphathisiwe Moyo and her daughter (cover). During a tea break at Mennonite World Conference in Zimbabwe in 2003, I asked permission to take their photo. Siphathisiwe said yes and requested a copy. She leaned over to write her name and address: a common moment.—*Editor*

Keep in touch with young adults

The Oct. 18 issue of *The Mennonite* featured the article "How to Minister to Young Adults." A part of the solution should be keeping in touch while they are gone. Suppose they are students on a nonchurch school campus. Our congregation now puts its Sunday services on the Internet to reach members at a distance. I look forward to learning what the new young adult network, organized at Charlotte 2005, can do to keep connections of young people to our church alive.—*Areta Lehman, Goshen, Ind.*

Conscientious objectors were martyrs

As part of my doctoral research, I have identified six young Mennonite men who died in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., after incarceration as conscientious objectors: Reuben J. Eash of Thomas, Okla., October 1918; Henry E. Franz of Hooker, Okla., Dec. 1, 1918; Johannes M. Klassen of Clinton, Okla.; Walter Sprunger of Berne, Ind., October 1918; Daniel Teuscher of Fisher, Ill., November 1918; Daniel S. Yoder of Applecreek, Okla., Jan. 26, 1919.

Two other young men died in the training camps: John G. Brubaker died April 15, 1918, possibly at Camp Meade in Maryland. John Witmer died Oct. 8, 1918, at Camp Sherman in Ohio of influenza.

These men were among more than 30 who died in the United States during World War I as conscientious objectors. Their treatment included torture, death threats, solitary confinement, exposure and starvation. Their lives and deaths have been overlooked in Mennonite history, and I hope to be able to reconstruct enough details so they can be remembered as the martyrs for their beliefs that they were.

If anyone has information on these young men, the circumstances of their death or any correspondence from them, I would appreciate receiving it. Military records or information on their sentencing would be especially appreciated. My contact information is P.O. Box 2223, Abbotsford, BC, Canada V2T 3X8, or email bhiebert@uniserve.com or phone 604-859-1556.—*Bruce Hiebert, Abbotsford, B.C.*

Purpose-driven (part three)

I applaud John Stoner for having the courage to critique Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* (Speaking Out, Nov. 1). I have not read *The Purpose-Driven Life* but have read Warren's other book, *The Purpose-Driven Church.*

It isn't clear to me why Stoner sees saving souls as being counter to God's purpose of saving the world. Warren talks about reaching this generation for Christ—which I presume Stoner describes as saving souls. Stoner says Warren's view is not pure gospel and therefore misleading, deceptive and dangerous. I agree with Stoner that a pure or whole gospel is about following Jesus and doing as Jesus did with his enemies. People that come to Christ under Warren's umbrella can become nonviolent disciples of Jesus. I believe our God has that kind of transforming power apart from Mennonites and Rick Warren.—*John Otto, Newton, Kan.*

I agree with John Stoner's assertion that God's purpose to save the world is more than saving some souls. At the same time, I would agree with the sentiment of Al Bontrager and others (Readers Say, Nov. 15) that God's purposes are not less than saving souls. God's purposes are not limited to but certainly include the saving of some souls, including mine. Can we affirm the both-and expression of God's purposes in Colossians 1:20: "to reconcile to himself all things … by making peace through his blood." God's invitation to peace is both personally intended and universally extended.—*Loren Horst, Harrisonburg, Va.*

Stoner responds

Rick Warren has done and is doing some very good things. I am grateful for that and apologize for not saying so (Speaking Out, Nov. 1). But then there is still more to say.

The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' time did some very good things, and they surely had their supporters among good, God-fearing people. This did not stop Jesus from exposing the failure of their overall program.

My critics dismissed, without much reflection, a few important lines in my article. I said, "The 'saving some souls' tradition stretches from Israel's kings through the bureaucracies of the scribes, Pharisees and temple establishment in Jesus' time to the political and ecclesiastical projects of Constantine and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, right on through to today's Religious Right neocons of the Bush administration and to the Commander in Chief himself."

Other names in the same Constantinian tradition that Rick Warren endorses in his emailed "Ministry Toolbox" include Adrian Rogers, Chuck Colson and Jerry Jenkins, co-author of the *Left Behind* series. These are men who must own their share of responsibility for the current betrayal of Jesus in the popular religious right of America.

I also said, "The definitions of evil and of enemy and the power by which evil and enemies are to be overcome are disputed points. The human project and Rick Warren's project must be to address with clarity and unwavering resolution these definitions and forms of power. … Jesus used the nonviolent power of compassion to face both personal and national enemies. Rick Warren does not advocate nonviolence or make it clear that all who claim to follow Jesus are called to do as Jesus did."

That is why I said his views are "deceptive," "dangerous" and "misleading." Those Mennonites who disagree with this assessment owe us more than a complaint that it is not true. I trust that the editors of *The Mennonite* will give them their 700 words to show why Rick Warren should not be expected to say that the way of the cross is not compatible with the way of the sword.

Readers need to know that I am not questioning whether Rick Warren or any of the millions of people profiting from his ministry were, are being or will be saved. They were, are and will be. I raised a different question: Will the world be saved by the theology or worldview or program of Rick Warren and his disciples?

Do I believe in miracles? Anybody willing to publish a 700-word critique of Rick Warren in *The Mennonite* either believes in miracles or is terminally masochistic; the first is true of me, not the second.—*John Stoner, Akron, Pa.*

Editor's note: With these letters we conclude the discussion of John Stoner's Nov. 1 Speaking Out entitled "We Need a Larger Purpose."

ONLINE POLL RESULTS

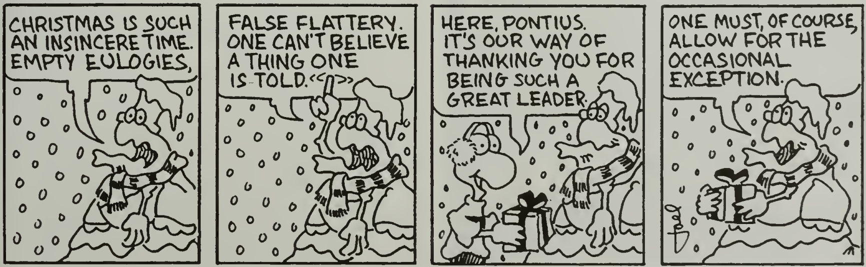
My household will practice alternative gift-giving (giving presents to other people in need rather than each other) this Christmas (34 votes):

○ Yes (38%)
○ No (50%)
○ Not sure (12%)

Check out the new poll question at www.TheMennonite.org

Pontius' Puddle

Joel Kauffmann


CHRISTMAS IS SUCH AN INSINCERE TIME. EMPTY EULOGIES,
FALSE FLATTERY. ONE CAN'T BELIEVE A THING ONE IS TOLD.
HERE, PONTIUS. IT'S OUR WAY OF THANKING YOU FOR BEING SUCH A GREAT LEADER.
ONE MUST, OF COURSE, ALLOW FOR THE OCCASIONAL EXCEPTION.

IN BRIEF

Colorado youth look at draft

A group of 25 students and eight sponsors gathered Dec. 2-3 in Denver to discuss peacemaking and conscientious objection to military service. Male and female youth from Mennonite and Church of the Brethren churches in Denver, Colorado Springs, Arvada, Lakewood, Fort Collins and Littleton, Colo., gathered for "Pizza and Justice: Considering Conscientious Objection." Different versions of Peacemakers Packets were available for youth to consider filling out to document their beliefs. Erin Durban of the American Friends Service Committee described current requirements for military registration, prompting questions and discussion about potential for a military draft.—*Barry C. Bartel*

Christmas traditions at Bethel turn 21, 20

Two Christmas traditions at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., turn 21 and 20 years old this year. Deutsche Weihnachten, or German Advent, began in 1985, when professor of German Merle Schlabaugh, then a new faculty member, organized an event like one he'd experienced in Iowa. Bethel's other long-running Christmas tradition, the Lighting of the Green, began in 1986 from an idea by Beth Hege, a 1989 Bethel graduate.
—*Bethel College*

Mennonite schools dedicate new buildings

Mennonite schools have dedicated new buildings or additions in the past two months.

Eastern Mennonite High School, Harrisonburg, Va., dedicated a new addition to the high school building Oct. 22.

The school first used sections of the new facilities in January and has since moved into the completed space. The new addition includes an acoustically designed auditorium with seating for 653 people, seven general purpose classrooms, two music classrooms, four practice studios, two art classrooms, one science classroom, and numerous offices, conference rooms and storage areas.

Bethany Christian Schools, Goshen, Ind., celebrated the completion of its major building project with a dedication service Nov. 6.

The grade 6-12 school, owned and operated by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, broke ground for its $4.65 million building and renovation project Feb. 18, 2004. In January, students moved into the new middle school wing that also included an auxiliary gymnasium, media center and administrative offices. Over the past two summers, major renovation areas included the cafeteria, science classrooms, new carpet and lockers in the hallways, and the creation of additional computer labs and high school classrooms.

Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi Village, Ariz., dedicated a new gymnasium Nov. 7. Nearly 300 people, including current students and other children, gathered in the new gym. Participants included some of the volunteers who had helped construct the building, former principals and teachers, representatives of churches that had provided funds, individual donors, family members of current students, tribal and village government officials and other friends. The students performed a dance routine, sang several songs and recited memorized Scripture verses.

Hopi Mission School was founded in 1951 as an outgrowth of General Conference Mennonite Church mission work that began in 1893. At that time, volunteers constructed a building that provided basic facilities for grades K-8. About 25 years later, a second building with space for a kitchen, cafeteria, chapel, library and additional classrooms went up.

The Hopi Mission School Foundation formed six years ago to provide long-term financial support for the school. Foundation staff in collaboration with the Hopi Mission School board, made up of representatives of Christian churches on the reservation, determined that building a gymnasium was a high priority.

Jim Yoder of Newton, Kan., a skilled builder and contractor, agreed to serve as the general contractor for the project after having come to the school for several two-week volunteer assignments doing maintenance and repair projects. Yoder drew the plans and developed the detailed specifications for the gym, with the Hopi Mission School Foundation responsible to raise the funds.—*Ben Bixler, Kevin Miller and Melanie Zuercher*

Melissa Engle

YAMEN! participant works in nursery school in Tanzani

Consuelo Mayette Gonzales, a participant in Young Anabapt Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN!), mingles with stude at Glory Mennonite Nursery School in Morogoro, Tanzania. T network is a joint program of Mennonite World Conference Mennonite Central Committee and makes it possible for you Anabaptists to live and work in another culture for a year. Gonzales is the first participant in the program from the Philippines.—*MCC*

Kraybill
MENNONITE
School

Gary Hiller

Lancaster, Kraybill Mennonite schools to unite

Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite School superintendent Richard Thomas, left, stands with Kraybill Mennonite School's head administrator John Weber in front of the 1898 Mennonite meetinghouse where the school began as part of Lancaster Mennonite School in 1949. After four years of study and discernment, the two schools have decided to unite, beginning July 1, 2006. The school will be an agency connected to Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Atlantic Coast Conference, both area conferences of Mennonite Church USA.

Bryant receives urban leader award

INDIANAPOLIS—B. Elaine Bryant preaches in an inner-city congregation, leads peace education programs in Chicago schools and works to keep young men from falling victim to the violence that can be all too prevalent on the streets. For her efforts, she received the George and Pearl Kauffman Award from Mennonite Mission Network Nov. 15 during the Urban Leaders Network meetings in Indianapolis.

B. Elaine Bryant

Bryant pastors Englewood Mennonite Church on Chicago's south side. She serves on the Illinois Mennonite Conference leadership team and is a former member of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board. Bryant also serves with the Chicago Opportunities for Peace in Action, the Englewood Renovation Project and on other neighborhood projects. She also writes for *The Mennonite*'s Grace and Truth column.

In accepting the award, Bryant said: "I see this as a manifestation of God's grace because immediately I thought of several other persons who seemed to have made much more of a contribution to urban ministry."—*Mennonite Mission Network*

Paul R. Yoder Sr. dies at 89

HARRISONBURG, Va.—Paul R. Yoder Sr., a longtime advocate for Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), died Nov. 29 in Harrisonburg. He was 89.

A native of Elverson, Pa., Yoder was a farmer 15 years before entering the ministry. He was pastor of Huber Mennonite Church, New Carlisle, Ohio, and Bay Shore Mennonite Church, Sarasota, Fla. He also was interim pastor two years at Ridgeway Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg.

Paul R. Yoder Sr.

Yoder was associate in church relations at EMU from 1986 to 1998, and served on the steering committee of the Loyal Royals, an EMU athletic support group, at the time of his death.

On Aug. 19, 1939, he married the former Grace Wingard, who survives. Also surviving are four sons—Paul R. Yoder Jr., a member of the EMU board of trustees; N. Wayne Yoder, Richard A. (Rick) Yoder, professor of business and economics at EMU; and Larry E. Yoder; their spouses, 10 grandchildren, four step-grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Yoder was the last surviving member of his immediate family.—*EMU*

Virginia church celebrates 100 years

CHESAPEAKE, Va.—Mt. Pleasant Mennonite Church in Chesapeake celebrated "100 Years of Building on Jesus Christ, Our Solid Foundation" Oct. 7-9. The crowd of 450 included folks who returned from as far away as Chile and Ecuador.

Daniel Smucker testified of his rededication to the Lord in that church more than 66 years earlier.

Held at Mt. Pleasant Christian School, the weekend activities included looking at old photos and memorabilia, plus sharing stories with one another. The church also sold a community cookbook and scrapbook.

The Hunt Family Fiddlers sang "Will the Sun Ever Shine Again," and Dale Keffer, a pastor who attended the church as a child, spoke. A group of young men acted out scenes from the lives of those who chose a path of peace and nonresistance during wartime. Margaret Smith shared her journey of faith and the influence Mt. Pleasant has had in her life.

Chester Wenger, a son of one of the earliest settlers in this community, testified of God's leading him and his family to serve in Africa. His son-in-law, Richard Showalter of Eastern Mennonite Missions, challenged the audience to move from their center of faith to new fringes of need beyond themselves.—*Linda Overholt*

—compiled by Gordon Houser

Courtesy photo

Reba Place Church releases *Gospel Journey* CD

On Nov. 19, Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill., hosted a "concert of worship and thanksgiving" in celebration of Reba Praise's new CD, *Gospel Journey*, produced by gospel artist Ray Bady and featuring the worship leading team from Reba Place. From left, Mollie Bady, Ken Stewart, Robert Bady and Anne Gavitt perform, with director Helen Hudgens at the piano. The CD is the fruit of Reba Place's journey over the last 15 years as it faced the challenge of becoming an antiracist and racially reconciling congregation. The CD sells for $15, and all proceeds support the ministries of the church. To order visit www.rebapraise.com or write Reba Place Church, P.O. Box 6017, Evanston, IL 60204.—*Ric Hudgens*

IN BRIEF

Lancaster bishops look at ordination of women

The bishops of Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite Conference have agreed to move forward with a discerning congregation process regarding the ordination of women in ministry in Lancaster Conference. The bishops defined the question thus: "For the sake of using all the gifts among us and reaching the goals of Vision 2010, if some congregations choose to call women to be ordained for ministry, how might your relationship with Bishop Board and the conference be affected and why?" *—Lancaster Conference News*

Creativity of Hesston older adults on display

The creativity of seven older adults living in the Hesston, Kan., area were on display at a White House Conference on Aging Dec. 12 in Washington. A six-by-four-foot panel of visual art and creative writing were part of a one-day reception and exhibition hosted by the National Center for Creative Aging and the American Society on Aging. Dwight Roth, sociology instructor at Hesston College, codirected the local art project along with two local elder artists, visual artist Sue Krueger and photographer Duane Graham, both from Hesston. *—Hesston College*

Where should we put the baby?

A Christmas meditation

by Dorothy Nickel Friesen

> *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favored! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor."*—Luke 1:26-31, The Jerusalem Bible

Where should we put the baby? Put the baby in the arms of ordinary young teenagers who ask questions.

Siphathisiwe Moyo, a Brethren In Christ woman from Zimbabwe, and her infant daughter attended the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Bulawayo in August 2003

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God-with-us is an experience we can have if we are open, receptive and obedient. We can ask questions, prod, use our intellect.

There is little doubt that Mary was a young woman, a teenager, most likely. There is also little doubt that Mary was a devout young woman, ready to hear the Word from the angel. However, Mary was no fool. She asked questions and queried even a messenger of God. "What do you mean that I am favored? What is your hidden agenda?"

I am suspicious if someone comes up to me and says, "I think you're pretty special. In fact, I think God has chosen you for a special opportunity." It's hard to know whether to run away, laugh, feel flattered or have a sinking feeling that you're being suckered into something you really ought to stay away from.

Mary seems to have had that same kind of suspicious, though open attitude. Just what is going on here? Why this strange visitor? Why this glorious greeting? What is going on here?

Over the years, Mary has been the object of worship and adoration. She has become the symbol of faithfulness and devotion, titles she well deserves. However, the point of commonality between Mary and us is often obscured when she becomes so ethereal and perfect. The distance between a teenager and the "Mother of God" is just too great.

Why did God choose Mary to be the mother of Jesus? Mary's situation in life was not exceptional. She was betrothed to a carpenter and was a woman of the working class. She was certainly not the beautifully robed aristocrat who appears in many art masterpieces (*Women and Jesus* by Alicia Craig Faxon). Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the choice: Mary was an ordinary woman, as all of us are ordinary women and men. Put the baby in the arms of the ordinary.

Mary was devout and responsive. God's gift of a son to the world came through an ordinary woman, an untitled member of humanity, a partaker in God's own creation. She probably did not think of herself as special. She accepted her task with a healthy sense of skepticism and questions.

Putting the baby in the arms of curious, vulnerable teenagers is the risk of the ages. But it is also the promise of all times, spanning all nations. The lesson of this season is that God's intention is to be with us. God-with-us is an experience we can have if we are open, receptive and obedient. We can ask questions, prod, use our intellect. Just what is going on? God is using us in our day and time to bring love and reconciliation into the world—just as Mary was used more than 2,000 years ago.

Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever, and his reign will have no end. Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about."—Luke 1:32-34, The Jerusalem Bible

Where shall we put the baby? Put the baby in the arms of sinners.

The context of Mary's question is one of pragmatism. "I am not married. How can I have a baby?" The angel answers with astounding news that her elder relative, Elizabeth, is pregnant. Another miracle has already occurred. How can this be? How can women with little public regard suddenly be the bearers of new life? What happened to them?

Even today, our families are crucibles of faith-forming experiences, despite obvious dysfunction and fractures.

Maybe the pregnancy of a relative was more convincing to Mary than her own. Mary needed a confirmation of God's promise so close, so believable, so intimate that her own family would be entirely consumed with "something new." Even today, our families are crucibles of faith-forming experiences, despite obvious dysfunction and fractures. Just as Mary's family absorbed the new realities of two unorthodox pregnancies, so today's families can be vehicles of grace and hope, even when disgraceful behavior mars our lives.

Continued on page 10

The Christmas baby is also the Easter Jesus, not confined to the grave but shattering the confines of crib or coffin.

Continued from page 9

In our North American culture, which claims to be godly, we recognize our own sins. How can it be, we might also ask, that this December, Americans will spend more than $100 billion, yet there will be millions of deaths from starvation and malnutrition around the world? How can it be that while we are celebrating Christmas there will be more than 20 wars raging around the world? How can it be that the needs of the homeless are more critical than ever? How can it be that there are 33 million poor people in the United States and about 2 million homeless people? How can it be that a baby changed a world? How can it be that a baby changed the course of history? How can it be that a baby changed my life? As sinners we are given this baby to hold and share with the world.

The questions do not end. And they should not. Christmas can be a time of renewal and recommitment. Just as Mary asked the angel questions, we too should be in conversation with our God about our life situations. We can go to God in prayer and in dialogue with others and ask the hard questions of life. We can use this season to set a new course and chart a new path of discipleship and servanthood.

The church, if it is the church, can call into question some common assumptions and lead the way to right thinking and right living. The Gospel calls us to remember that Jesus did not come as a triumphant King, fully grown and fully powerful, but that Jesus came as a vulnerable baby, born of an ordinary woman.

It is into the arms of sinners that God entrusts the precious gift of life. Into our arms come the gifts of the season, ready to be shared with others. Into our families come the surprises—a father losing a job, a daughter getting pregnant, a son getting hooked on drugs—and the whole family must absorb the unemployment, the baby, the addiction. The family either designs a new network or the cobweb breaks apart. Mary and Joseph created a cobweb, speaking metaphorically, of a family that incorporated the faith community as part of its thread.

Into the arms of resisters—called "sinners" and "lawbreakers" by some, those women who refuse to sit at the back of the bus, those men who refuse to shoot a gun—comes the gift of the Christ child, vulnerable and defenseless. Into the arms of those who cannot read, who do not own computers, who do not own land, comes the gift of the Christ child, holy and innocent. Into the arms of children comes the gift of a Christ child, wailing and crying—calling attention to the need to be fed, warmed and clothed. This child is ready to be incorporated into our communities—our broken communities.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then to the disciple he said, "This is your mother." And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.—John 19:25-27, The Jerusalem Bible

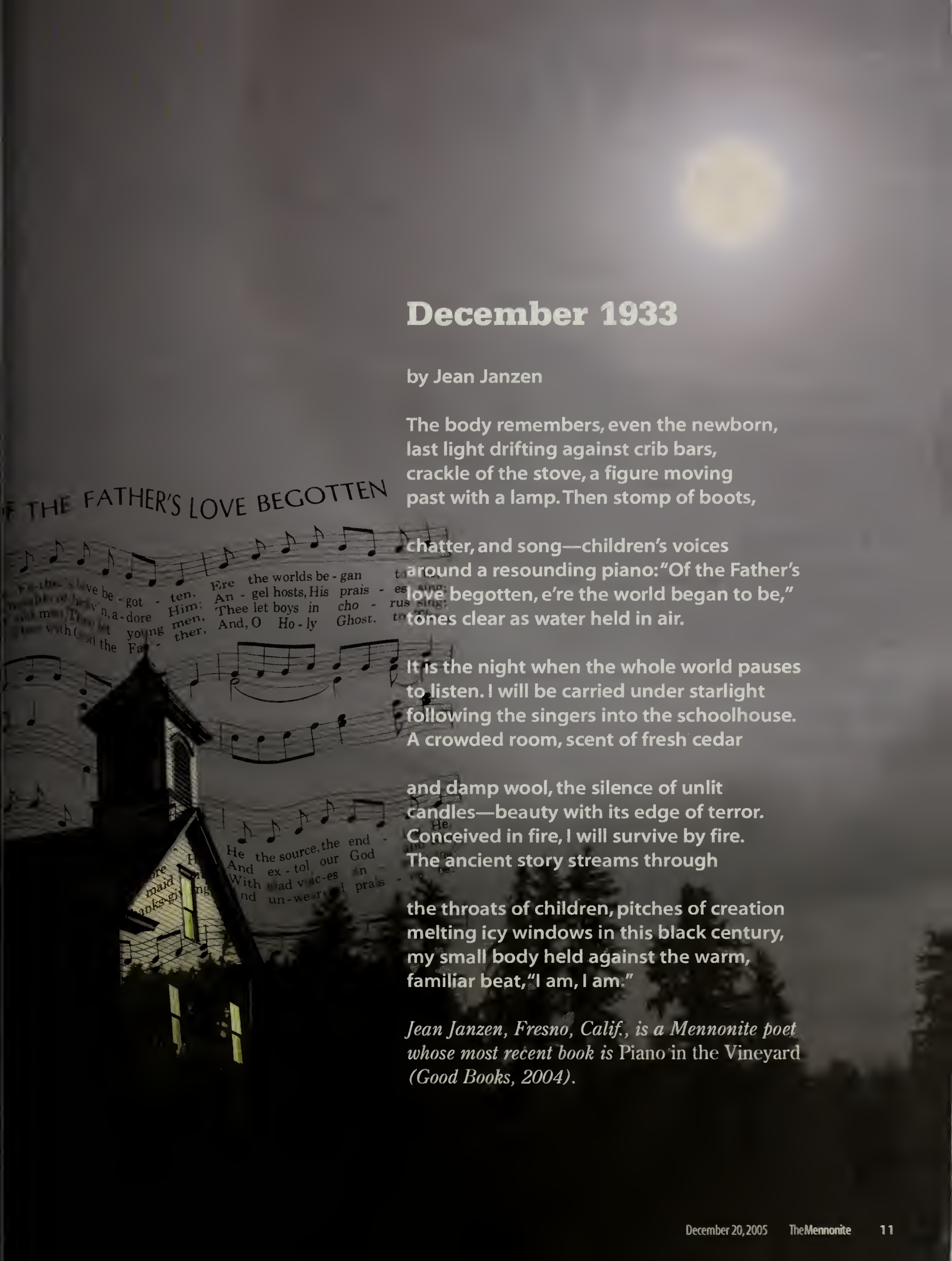
Where shall we put the baby? Put the baby into a crude manger—that becomes a coffin.

The twinkling lights of Christmas belie the future of the baby. The baby will most surely be put in the manger, but that manger will, in fact, become a coffin. How harsh and how seemingly unsweet this baby Jesus story becomes when we realize the life this child will lead—and lose. We put the baby in the manger because we are people who need a safe albeit crude image of a vulnerable Jesus welcomed into the world. We want to believe that ordinary people held the baby and that he was loved into adulthood. We need to believe that this child, though certainly King, would be spared the cruel life that ordinary folks must experience. But the message of the gospel is the good news of hope amid incredible poverty, disease, cruelty and oppression. This baby was loved to life and gave his life for love. We put the baby in the manger, yet the manger will not hold him for long. The growth of love fills the manger, spills into the world and finally loves the whole world.

It seems the birth narratives of Christmas must be about the baby in the manger but also about a serving Jesus, a redeeming Christ, a nonviolent Savior. This baby will live in the world, confronting the powerful, challenging the unjust and welcoming the repentant. However, speaking truth to power will have consequences. The Christmas baby is also the Easter Jesus, not confined to the grave but shattering the confines of crib or coffin.

This Christmas, put the baby into ordinary arms and expect the miracle of life to transform the rich and the lowly, the proud and the humble, the hungry and the fed. Put the baby into our arms.

Dorothy Nickel Friesen is conference minister for Western District Conference.


F THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN
ten, Ere the worlds be - gan
Him; An - gel hosts, His prais - es sing
men, Thee let boys in cho - rus sing
ther, And, O Ho - ly Ghost,
He the source, the end
And ex - tol our God

December 1933

by Jean Janzen

The body remembers, even the newborn,
last light drifting against crib bars,
crackle of the stove, a figure moving
past with a lamp. Then stomp of boots,

chatter, and song—children's voices
around a resounding piano: "Of the Father's
love begotten, e're the world began to be,"
tones clear as water held in air.

It is the night when the whole world pauses
to listen. I will be carried under starlight
following the singers into the schoolhouse.
A crowded room, scent of fresh cedar

and damp wool, the silence of unlit
candles—beauty with its edge of terror.
Conceived in fire, I will survive by fire.
The ancient story streams through

the throats of children, pitches of creation
melting icy windows in this black century,
my small body held against the warm,
familiar beat, "I am, I am."

Jean Janzen, Fresno, Calif., is a Mennonite poet whose most recent book is Piano in the Vineyard *(Good Books, 2004).*

What child *is* this?

Lessons from a Christmas song

by Kenneth L. Gibble

There is a Christmas song nearly everybody knows, a song that takes its title from the first four words: "What Child Is This?" That's usually the way we say or sing it: What *child* is this? But maybe we ought to say it another way: What child *is* this?

It's a good question. What child is this anyway, this child sleeping on Mary's lap, greeted by the greatest, an angel choir, and visited by the least, a bunch of shepherds? And if he is really King of Kings and Lord of Lords, why, as the song puts it, does he lie in such "mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding"?

Maybe because God wants to tell the world something about divinity, that the place to look for the holy is in the commonplace. Isn't that what the grown man Jesus was trying to tell us when he said that we will meet him face to face whenever we feed the hungry, visit the prisoner, welcome the stranger, that in simple acts of service to those in need we are, believe it or not, serving him?

Maybe that donkey we imagine Mary riding on as she and Joseph travel to Bethlehem is a forerunner to the donkey Jesus himself will ride years later when he enters Jerusalem and is hailed by a joyful crowd.

Dee Birkey

Watch and listen for God in the common places, in the simplest, earthiest things: a single candle lighted in a dark room, a smile from a stranger as you elbow your way through a crowded store, an embrace from a loved one, the visit of birds to your feeder in the back yard.

Maybe that, among other things, is what Luke's account of the birth is saying to you, to me. And maybe that donkey we imagine Mary riding on as she and Joseph travel to Bethlehem is a forerunner to the donkey Jesus himself will ride years later when he enters Jerusalem and is hailed by a joyful crowd. And maybe the wood of that manger, "rude and bare," as one of the Christmas songs puts it, is a foreshadowing of the rude, bare wood of the cross he will hang upon. "Nails, spear shall pierce him through," the song says, "the cross be borne for me, for you."

Looking on the quiet, lovely scene of Joseph, Mary and her baby, you and I will sometimes feel a chill blow across the backs of our necks. We know what lies ahead for this child. As a small boy, I once heard my grandmother musing aloud. She wondered if, when a baby is born, instead of celebrating, we should be shedding tears, for we know that every human life is touched by suffering, pain, loss.

But we don't do that. A baby born is always a sign of hope, promise, new possibilities. Especially this baby, this one we call "Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

How is God with us? How is God with you? Where do you look for God? How do you listen for God?

I hope for you and me, as we draw nearer the day on which we celebrate the birth of the Christ child, that we will watch and listen for God in the common places, in the simplest, earthiest things: a single candle lighted in a dark room, a smile from a stranger as you elbow your way through a crowded store, an embrace from a loved one, the visit of birds to your feeder in the back yard. Can it be that God can be found in such common places?

Yes. Oh yes.

There is another Christmas song worth mentioning. It's not at all like "What Child Is This?" This other song enumerates what "my true love gave to me" on the 12 days of Christmas. On the first day of Christmas, you remember, my true love gave to me "a partridge in a pear tree." Then in succeeding days come two turtledoves, three French hens, four calling birds, until finally we get to five gold rings, something of a relief after all those birds.

Years ago I saw a TV show that depicted what all those gifts on the 12 days of Christmas would have looked like. It started out innocently. A delivery man rides his bicycle up to the house, knocks on the door and hands a miniature pear tree with a partridge sitting on one of the branches to a young woman. She smiles with delight at this lovely gift.

The next day he returns with another pear tree with another partridge in it plus a cage containing two turtledoves. Each day he returns, and after a few days the one receiving the gifts isn't smiling quite so much. Birds are flying all over the house, laying eggs at inappropriate places and depositing other signs of their presence on the carpet and furniture. Things really start getting out of hand when six geese alaying and then seven swans aswimming are brought to the house. When eight maids amilking eight cows show up, the scene turns into utter chaos. By the time the pipers, dancers, drummers and lords aleaping appear, the beloved has had enough. She runs screaming from the house.

The whole thing was hilarious, as it poked fun at the orgy of buying gifts that has invaded what ought to be a time of simple yet profound joy in our hearts for the gift of a child who reveals to us that the commonplace can be holy.

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? This, this is Christ the King, the holy gift who helps us see that on the first day of Christmas, and the second day, and the third day, and every other day of our lives, our True Love gives us the gift of love itself, love that declares we are treasured beyond imagining by the One who lighted not just the star that guided the wise men but all the stars.

So let us do as the Christmas song urges us to. Let us "raise, raise the song on high; [as] the virgin sings her lullaby; joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary."

Kenneth L. Gibble is a free-lance writer in Greencastle, Pa.

together
sharing all of
Christ
with all of creation

PART 2 OF AN EIGHT-PART SERIES

Africans and Americans model faith for each other

by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

The compelling drum rhythms enticed even the stiff-bodied American observers into the circle of glistening dancers two-stepping to the beat of community health messages. Edward Tachin's gifts as a lead singer were confirmed by the prize he won that day in Dassa, Benin, where one of Mennonite Mission Network's partners sponsored a competition for the best original musical composition about the prevention of Benin's top killer: malaria.

The local radio station broadcast Tachin's song as a public service message the week after the competition. However, fame can wear a frightening face in the area around Dassa, a region known for its powerful sorcery. Soon after Tachin's award-winning performance, one of his children died.

Tachin stopped singing.

He explained the logic of his reaction to Christine and Phil Lindell Detweiler of Mennonite Mission Network, who ministered in central Benin from 1994 to 2004.

"The diviner told me someone was jealous of me and took revenge by cursing my child. In order to protect my other children, I no longer sing," Tachin said.

The Lindell Detweilers and their Beninese colleagues had many opportunities to share with Tachin about the hope available to him in Jesus.

"We told him he could know this Jesus who is more powerful than any other spiritual force and that Jesus would walk with him and his family through all challenges," Phil said.

But this news seemed too good to be true. Tachin couldn't believe it.

Soon after, François Okoumassou, a village heath promoter and colleague of Christine and Phil, invited them for a meal of pounded yams. As they ate, the Lindell Detweilers noticed an unknown girl playing with Okoumassou's seven children.

Maybe the North American church should institute a ritual in which we destroy all that tempts us to trust in something other than Jesus.—Phil Lindell Detweiler

Singing for health: A drummer for the village folklore group of Zouto plays during a celebration in Benin.

The child was Tachin's daughter. A priest of traditional religion had foretold that this girl would die within that year. Though Okoumassou assured Tachin that faith in Jesus would protect his family from curses, the father still deemed the decision too risky. Tachin continued to beg Okoumassou to care for his daughter.

"He knew no harm would come to her in the home of a Christian," Okoumassou said.

The little girl thrived during the year the priest predicted her death. Her survival opened the door of faith for her father.

A few months before Christine and Phil's departure from Benin, a group of Christians gathered to watch Tachin take action on a decision he had pondered for five years. He set fire to his gris-gris (objects used in African traditional religions to thwart curses and guarantee prosperity).

"He needed to burn these things to show that from that day forward his trust would only be in Jesus," Phil said.

Christine Lindell Detweiler

Leap of faith: After becoming a Christian, Edward Tachin destroyed all of his gris-gris—talismanic items used for protection from the spirit world. The community gathered to watch him create a small pile on the dirt, strike a match and burn what he had held as his spiritual protection. Later that same day, Tachin's infant child died.

Tachin explained that he finally took his leap of faith because he was spending a large portion of his income for gris-gris, but that investment didn't provide the protection he desired.

After a joyful time of worship, the Christians returned to their homes. "We affirmed with the apostle Paul that we know in whom we have believed and are convinced that he is able to guard what we have entrusted to him to the very end," Phil said.

Within a matter of hours, however, a somber Okoumassou announced his arrival in the Lindell Detweiler courtyard. He brought news that Tachin's youngest child had been taken to the hospital. Medical personnel diagnosed severe anemia.

Phil accompanied Okoumassou to the hospital, prayed and sat with the family. He left when the child appeared to be improving.

Okoumassou visited the Lindell Detweilers a third time that same day to announce the child's death.

"We were floored by the news and cried out to God asking how he could let such a thing happen on the very day Edward affirmed his trust in the Lord," Christine said.

But Tachin didn't waver in his faith. At the infant's funeral, he repeated his commitment to following wherever Jesus might lead. "If I had turned to the Lord earlier, this child may not have died," Tachin said.

Tachin attends church regularly with his family. Though he has not resumed singing, his silence is not due to fear of death. He wants to be more grounded biblically before he starts composing Christian songs.

"Edward has been a real inspiration to us," Phil said. "Maybe the North American church should institute a ritual in which we destroy all that tempts us to trust in something other than Jesus. Shouldn't we, too, make a public statement of our total reliance on Jesus, eschewing the protection of insurance and other material crutches in which we North Americans tend to put our faith?"

Lynda Hollinger-Janzen is a writer for Mennonite Mission Network.

Witnesses to Christ's healing across the world

In 15 years of Mennonite mission work, Phil and Christine Lindell Detweiler have learned that it is too simplistic to say being a Christian shields us from all evil.

During their first years of ministry in Liberia, they saw many attempts to live out faithful discipleship destroyed by the evils of a horrific civil war.

When rampant violence wiped out the possibility of work in rural Liberia, Christine and Phil moved to Benin, where they walked alongside an existing church-based community development organization.

They worked in a collaborative manner. They patiently encouraged long-term sustainability rather than quick results. They did not inject huge doses of outside funding. They helped communities create a bank that gave small loans to women to begin cottage industries. The increased income from these businesses enabled women to send their children to school and buy medicine when family members fell ill.

The community development organization prospered for several years as Beninese Christians lived out their faith through its ministries. But competition and conflict arose within the organization. Some in the agency, including the Lindell Detweilers, received threats.

This month, after a sabbatical year in the United States, Christine and Phil Lindell Detweiler and their three children—Nathan, 12, Annika, 9, and Lydia, 8—begin a new community development assignment with Mennonite Mission Network and partner agency Breakthru International in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

The Lindell Detweiler family anticipates using the mission tools they developed in West Africa in their new location.

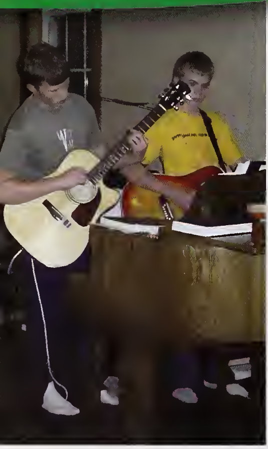
"We are conscious of being earthen vessels, but we pray that the Lord will use us with all our failings and imperfections," Christine says. "We are so awed with how the Lord works through the global church to bring healing and hope. We really want to be a part of that work in whatever way the Lord can use us."

Though they won't be returning to Benin, the Lindell Detweilers have faith that as they share their faith with their new South African neighbors, the seeds previously planted will be watered and harvested by Beninese brothers and sisters.

For Phil, the measure of a mission endeavor's success isn't in the number of organizations built or dismantled. Success is found "in the number of transformed lives 10 years after we leave."—*Lynda Hollinger-Janzen*

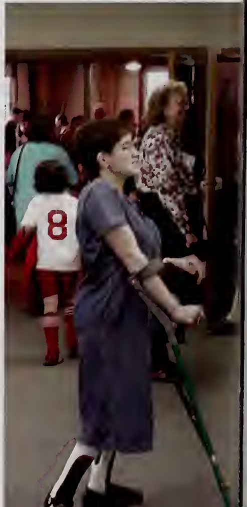
Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA



Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship in Goshen, Ind., was started in 1979 through the collaborative efforts of several Goshen congregations that were crowded. With the vision to be Christ's loving, caring and healing presence, attendance now averages 200—one-quarter of whom are middle and high school youth. Anglos, African-Americans and Hispanics attend, as well as people from Brazil, Canada, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Korea, Laos and Vietnam.

Approximately 35 percent of employed adults in the congregation work in Mennonite Church USA-related agencies and schools in Elkhart County. The church building is located on the west side of Goshen.—*Daniel P. Schrock*



Photos clockwise from page 15 (left to right in each photo): Aaron Shenk and an unidentified friend play their guitars during worship; Elise and Curt Wenger watch a baptism in a pond; members of the Mennonite Youth Fellowship pose in the MYF room; Patsy Sherer, Corey, Lavonn and Carisssa Hostetler at a Crazy Hat Harvest party; Emily Krabill, Jenea Born, Abe Thorn, Elise Wenger (held by Olivia) and Sadie Drescher listen to a story during a worship service; a children's Sunday school class; Laura Sommers during a fellowship time; pastor Dan Schrock (in hooded sweatshirt), John Nussbaum and Lisa Nussbaum during a Crazy Hat Harvest party. Photos by Joyce Pankratz and Ron and Lori Good

Hyattsville Mennonite Church follows Jesus

Melvin D. Schmidt is a member of Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church. He served 36 years in pastoral ministry.

When I interviewed at Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church prior to being called as its pastor in 1993, one of the members of the search committee asked me, "Why do you want to become our pastor?" I answered without hesitation, "Because I think Hyattsville Mennonite Church is one of the most important Mennonite churches in our nation."

In the intervening years, what I have experienced and observed has strengthened my conviction in this matter. The pews are filled on Sunday morning with worshipers who, during the week, work in various agencies, both governmental and nongovernmental, where they help make decisions that impact our nation and world. One member, a congressional aide, was deciding how hundreds of millions of dollars in highway money was to be allocated. Another is a researcher for USDA and tracks rural poverty and hunger issues. He is a recognized authority on rural hunger and is often consulted by governments of other countries. Several vice presidents of the World Bank have been worshipers at Hyattsville during my years there. Members of this church regularly publish research papers and present lectures worldwide on medical, nutritional, educational, economical and other issues. Leaders of peace and justice organizations have been active members of Hyattsville. A number of lawyers in the congregation have defended death-row inmates, illegal immigrants and political asylum seekers free of charge.

Hyattsville has played a critical role in its hospitality ministries, including hosting hundreds of 1-W and voluntary service workers, and for the past 30 years operating the International Guest House, as well as giving assistance to Mennonite families coming to Washington for medical help at NIH, which has a significant number of Hyattsville members in its labs, medical offices and nurses stations.

One may expect such a congregation to be highly valued for the many gifts it brings to the wider church. However, Allegheny Conference delegates said on Nov. 5 that no elected positions in the Allegheny Conference or Mennonite Church USA can be filled by Hyattsville members so long as the congregation continues its membership policy, specifically as it relates to the welcoming of gays and lesbians who are in committed relationships.

As one reviews the Mennonite landscape in North America, the inconsistency of practice among us becomes clear. A number of conferences have made room in their ranks for those congregations who welcome gays and lesbians. Other conferences have disciplined such congregations and then reinstated them. Some congregations, expelled in one conference, have sought fellowship and received it from another conference.

There are and have always been glaring inconsistencies in our practice of church polity. At least three conferences have not intervened or even questioned the authority of local congregations who have kept convicted murderers on their membership lists. A recent court decision in Kansas found a Mennonite couple guilty of sexually abusing clients in their group homes over the course of many years. The couple is awaiting sentencing for some 30 counts each, carrying a possible sentence of 10 years per count. Yet no questioning of this couple's church membership by their conference has occurred or will likely occur. This is considered a matter in which the conference trusts the local congregation and has no desire to prosecute them.

The Mennonite's editor praises Mennonite Church USA for developing membership guidelines ("Rules Help Discernment," June 21), yet these guidelines are so inconsistently enforced and so variously understood by conferences as to make them meaningless. This happens when churches write creedal statements in order to impose uniformity rather than developing relationships of trust by which diversity in the church can be affirmed. Our Anabaptist forebears turned radically away from creeds, choosing instead to trust the local group of believers gathered around the Word through whom Christ is known and followed.

On the issues facing us now, as well as on other issues that we will face in the future, we will be on the right track if we can commit ourselves to recovering the part of the Anabaptist vision that did not put faith in the writing of creeds but looked toward following Jesus as the ultimate answer. On this matter, Hyattsville has done its homework and is confident that its welcoming stance toward gay and lesbian people with serious Christian commitment is, for them, the way of following Jesus. TM

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The dance of stewardship**—Roy E. Bronkema
- **Real families**—a new column

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the official positions of *The Mennonite*, the board for The Mennonite, Inc., or Mennonite Church USA.

Four CPT members still missing in Iraq

Story spreads to mainstream media; some Muslims appeal for CPTers' release.

Christian Peacemaker Teams want to "get in the way" of violence. For the first time in its 21-year history, CPT had its workers abducted while getting in the way of a war.

"What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war?" says the question at the top of CPT's Web site.

On Nov. 26, four of its workers went missing in Iraq while demonstrating such devotion: Canadians James Loney, 41, and Harmeet Singh Sooden, 32; American Tom Fox, 54; and Briton Norman Kember, 74 (see also "CPT Workers Abducted in Baghdad," Dec. 6).

A group claiming to hold the CPTers first set Dec. 8 as the deadline for their release if the group's demands were not met. On Dec. 7, the group postponed the deadline until Dec. 10, designated International Human Rights Day. That deadline passed without further word from those claiming to hold the CPTers.

One day before the first deadline, the CPT team in Iraq released an appeal through the Arabic language news network Al-Jazeerah and other Arabic and English media (see box).

Meanwhile, news of the missing CPTers and appeals for their release spread from Christian communities around the world to Muslim groups and the mainstream media in the West.

The *Chicago Tribune* said in a Dec. 9 story about Christian Peacemaker Teams: "The group had never been the target of kidnapping before, [CPT] officials said, but members have been booted out of countries. The organization must now weigh whether to stay in Iraq. Several members said they hope the work will carry on in the war-torn country"

CPT

Christian Peacemaker Teams member Harmeet Sooden on a farm outside Jenin, Palestine, where he was helping plant olive trees. Sooden, a Canadian, is among four CPTers missing since Nov. 26.

On Dec. 12 a London newspaper, *The Observer*, said there was an "unprecedented outpouring of condemnations … across the Muslim world" and requests for the release of CPTer Norman Kember.

Mennonite World Conference sent a letter to its constituent groups around the world, asking MWC members to do three things: pray for the captives' release, make comments and sign the petition at www.petitionspot.com/petitions/freethecpt, and encourage their governments to support the release of the CPT.

MWC also said, "CPT is requesting that words such as kidnapping, kidnappers, captors, hostages, victims, death threats, kill or references to the name of the group claiming responsibility, Swords of Righteousness Brigade, and al-Jazeera video footage of the men's images not be used."

"Those words … are not helpful," MWC quoted CPT spokesman William Payne as saying. "CPT chooses to use language like 'hosts' and 'guests,' which is unusual … but more helpful in messages picked up in the Muslim world."—*Everett J. Thomas*

Christian Peacemaker Teams member Tom Fox with children at an unidentified location. Fox, who is a U.S. citizen, is among four CPT members missing in Iraq.

CPT

Christian Peacemaker Teams' appeal on Al-Jazeera network

While we believe the action of kidnapping is wrong, we do not condemn you as people. We recognize the humanity in each person and respect it very much. This includes you, our colleagues and all people. We believe there needs to be a force that counters all the resentment, the fear, the intimidation felt by the Iraqi people. We are trying to be that force: to speak for justice, to advocate for the human rights of Iraqis, to look at an Iraqi face and say: my brother, my sister. Perhaps you are men who only want to raise the issue of illegal detention. We don't know what you may have endured. As you can see by the statements of support from our friends in Iraq and all over the world, we work for those who are oppressed. We also condemn our own governments for their actions in Iraq.

Please, we appeal to your humanity to show mercy on our brothers and let them come back safely to us to continue our work. May God spare our friends and all the people of Iraq any further suffering.

MC USA facing major budget shortfalls

Donors shift giving from denominational ministries to disaster relief programs.

Mennonite Church USA has experienced significant funding shortages during 2005, and without additional financial support by the end of the year programs or ministries will be cut or reduced. Churchwide ministries experiencing noticeable shortfalls this year include Executive Leadership, Mennonite Education Agency, Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Publishing Network. And while church leaders understand economic situations affect people's abilities to give, they are being forced to face difficult scenarios—ones that include staff cuts.

"Many people are not aware of the behind-the-scenes role of churchwide leadership," says Jim Schrag, executive director for Mennonite Church USA. "From writers for Sunday school lessons to people who create an environment of call for new pastors, the list is long of things that help congregations operate their local ministry and teaching programs."

With a fund-raising focus on development costs for a new Sunday school curriculum, MPN has raised only $240,000, which is 35 percent of its goal. Even if the agency had not increased its budget for this year, the amount raised would represent about 43 percent of its needs.

As of Oct. 31, Executive Leadership had received about 59 percent of its budget needs for this year. At the same time last year, it had received 65 percent of its budget. More than $860,000 still was needed at the end of October to meet budget for 2005.

Mennonite Mission Network's contributions through November were down 5.5 percent from last year, and the agency had only received 63 percent of its budget for fiscal year 2006 at the end of November. That means Mission Network needs 16.2 percent more—or a total of about $2.4 million —from its donors in December and January than it received a year ago.

MEA's contributions are down by 5.6 percent from the last fiscal year to its current one and down 19.6 percent when compared with giving in 2002-03. The agency, which operates on a different fiscal calendar than the other churchwide ministries, needs an additional $188,495 by June 30, 2006, to meet its goals for that year.

The overwhelming lack of funds for the denomination does not mean people are not giving to causes they believe in, says Marty Lehman, director of financial development for Mennonite Church USA. Increasingly, people are shifting their regular giving priorities to disaster relief.

"While giving to disaster relief efforts is a good thing," Lehman says, "we also need to continue to support nonemergency organizations. We just need to be mindful of all the organizations we support and what the implications will be if we discontinue our support."

Those wanting to make donations may send payments directly to any one of Mennonite Church USA's churchwide ministries. Donations made to Mennonite Church USA will be distributed among all the churchwide ministries and may be sent to P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. The denomination also encourages gifts to congregations and area conferences.—*Marathana Prothro of Mennonite Church USA*

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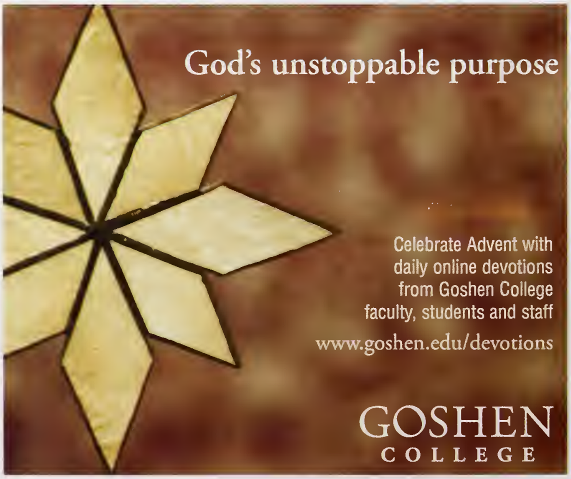
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GOSHEN
COLLEGE

English teachers reach Koreans at center

Relationships built through university classes challenge Confucian status quo.

The heart of busy Seoul seems an unlikely place for a business run by an Anabaptist or Mennonite organization. North American Mennonites working here are more accustomed to simple living and being the "quiet in the land," but with the students enrolled in Connexus coming and going from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., life is anything but quiet and simple.

Staff members at the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC) dreamed of a strong response when they announced the opening of Connexus, an English language ministry, in October 2004 but were surprised by what God had in store. Connexus has grown from two teachers instructing 18 students to five teachers and more than 110 students—with a rising need for more teachers to meet the demand.

Sheldon Sawatzky, Mennonite Mission Network's director for East Asia, says the need is not limited to Korea. International partners across Asia are pleading for more workers to teach English in their communities and programs.

"Teaching English as a ministry provides remarkable opportunities for sharing one's faith in word and action," Sawatzky says. "We can immediately place scores of English teachers."

Tim Friesen arrived in Korea in June as an intern with Connexus, which both Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada Witness support. A graduate in English from Canadian Mennonite University and engaged to be married next fall, Friesen came upon Connexus while looking for a unique cross-cultural learning experience in a supportive community. His first time living in a metropolis such as Seoul, some differences from North American life struck him as soon as he arrived.

"Something you will experience right away is Seoul's 'busyness,'" Friesen says. "There are people on the street at all hours of the day, it seems."

In the midst of activity, Friesen witnesses an alternative to the busyness by taking time to focus on relationships, whether in class or enjoying fellowship over a meal shared with Connexus and KAC staff at the school.

These friendships between teachers and students—out of place in Korea's entrenched Confucian hierarchy and fast-paced business society—challenge the status quo.

"The main difference between Connexus and other English schools is the relationships that you have the opportunity to build with the students," Friesen says. "Some will even spend all their time studying, and you will see them every day. Some of the students will even cry at the end of the month when they are finished with their classes and move on to other things."

With classes of no more than six students, Friesen can get to know each student, not only to address language learning struggles but to engage them on a personal level as well.

As they learn to know one another, students and teachers take part in valuable cross-cultural learning. One student who finished her studies at Connexus several months ago emailed the staff that not only did she enjoy the friendships with teachers while she studied but they had changed her perception of Westerners.—*Cheryl Woelk of Mennonite Mission Network*

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Katrina destroyed 1969 home MDS built

Halton family says of Mennonites, 'The Christ in them, you could just feel that.'

Decades after Hurricane Camille struck in 1969—destroying his home in Pass Christian, Fla., the day after he turned 10 years old—Alfred Halton Jr., and his mother, Emma, can still remember how Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers gave not only their work but their hearts to this community.

"They were really like family," Emma Halton says. "They would greet us with a hug. The Christ in them, you could just feel that. They cared, they wanted to help and they did everything to prove that they cared."

This Gulf Coast community was struck again with the brunt of Hurricane Katrina. Alfred Halton Jr. and Emma Halton recently shared their story of Hurricane Camille from a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer sitting between the rubble of the home MDS built and a newer, larger one the family built later. Family photographs and diplomas dry on the front porch.

Even in the aftermath of the latest catastrophe, they speak with gratitude for what MDS did for them some 36 years ago.

Money was tight, and volunteers worked with the Haltons to salvage material from their destroyed home—the house Emma grew up in—to rebuild a new one-bedroom house the family could live in until they had resources for a larger home.

"Even though it was a small home, we were getting out of a (FEMA) trailer, getting back to our neighborhood," Alfred says.

Alfred remembers how his father would bring him from the trailer over to the construction site to check progress on the house and to see volunteers who stuck around after a day's work to play ball with neighborhood children.

"Here they were building homes, trying to help people, and they'd take time off to play with the kids," Alfred says. "That always stuck in the back of my mind—the Mennonites, good people."

Those were memories strong enough to last into adulthood.

"That's the kind of impression they make," he says. "They were in the community helping people any way they could."

Today MDS is back, working to clean up and rebuild.—*Marla Pierson Lester for Mennonite Disaster Service*

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CALENDAR

Call for papers for the **3rd Mennonite Graduate Student Conference** to be held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, June 10-12, 2006. Papers on the theme of "Exclusion" from a wide variety of disciplines are welcomed. The deadline for papers is Feb. 15. For more information on paper proposals, visit www.grebel.uwaterloo.ca/tmts/gradconf/shtml. This conference is sponsored by Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre (TMTC).

Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., ***winter lectures***, Jan. 30-31, 2006. Speakers: Alvin Dueck, Evelyn and Frank Freed, professor of the integration of psychology and theology, Fuller Theological Seminary. Dueck's focus will be the intersection of faith and psychology. For more information, call 877-231-4570 or visit www.cmu.ca.

Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., ***Bridging the Gap: Ministry in Context***, Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2006. Conference is for pastors, church leaders and laity. It will focus on ministry in various contexts, such as rural, urban and with youth and seniors. Featured speaker is Ray Bystrom of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, Ca. For more information, call 877-231-4570 or visit www.cmu.ca.

Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., ***Peace it Together: Somebody Better Say Something***, March 10-12, 2006. This annual conference is for youth and young adults who want to become passionate about God by exploring issues connected to peacemaking. Featured speaker: Brenda Matthews, actress, poet, playwright and social activist from Chicago, Ill. For more information, call 877-231-4570 or visit www.cmu.ca.

Sing the Journey: A Worship and Music Retreat, Jan. 13-15, 2006, at **Camp Shekinah**, Saskatchewan. Cosponsored by Canadian Mennonite University Institute for Theology and the Church and Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. This event is for worship planners and leaders, musicians and artists and all those interested in engaging with God in worship in imaginative and creative ways. For more information, contact CMU at 204-487-3300 or 877-231-4570 or Mennonite Church Saskatchewan at 306-249-4844.

WORKERS

Frederick, Emma Longenecker, was ordained Oct. 12 as transition pastor at Glennon Heights Mennonite Church, Lakewood, Colo.

Gerber, Rachel S. Springer, was licensed Nov. 20 as associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

Gerber, Shawn Michael, was licensed Nov. 20 as associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Denver, Colo.

Schrag, Rhoda, was installed Nov. 20 as pastor at Fellowship of Hope, Elkhart, Ind.

Stoltzfus, Eldon, was ordained Oct. 9 as pastor at Forks Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Weidner, Mark, ended Nov. 6 as co-pastor of Perkasie (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

BIRTHS & ADOPTIONS

Berkey, Anna Elizabeth, Sept. 21, to Michael and Nicole Greenwalt Berkey, Harrisonburg, Va.

Byler, Julia Grace, Oct. 5, to Jeremy and Jody Byler, Harrisonburg, Va.

Chupp, Morgan Elizabeth, Nov. 8, to David and Sara Rhodes Chupp, Goshen, Ind.

Dixon, Connor Joseph, Nov. 16, to Joey Dixon and Jessica Klug, South Bend, Ind.

Dufour, Kerri Lillian, Oct. 25, to John and Sharon Dufour, Meridian, Miss.

Graber, Emma Grace, Aug. 1, to Corbin and Tonya Gundy Graber, Divide, Colo.

Green, Annelise Lauren, Nov. 11, to Sam and Laura Gunden Green, New Paris, Ind.

Groff, Dawson Daniel, Sept. 23, Bryan and Jill Heider Groff, Akron, Pa.

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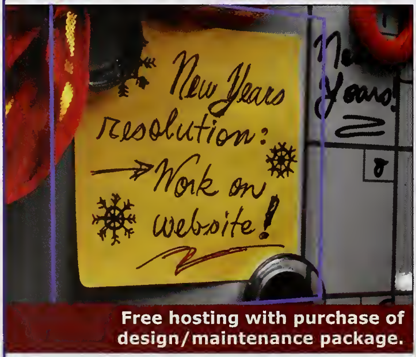

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High, Genevieve Grace, Oct. 26, to David and Margaret Weaver High, Lancaster, Pa.

Lind, James Isaac, Oct. 12, to Matt and Sarah Kraybill Lind, Lancaster, Pa.

Martin, Zayne Wyatt, Nov. 2, to Ashley Martin, Goshen, Ind.

Metekai, Lillian Senewa, Nov. 16, to Elijah and Priscillah Parmuat Metekai, Goshen, Ind.

Miller, Amber Lynn, Nov. 12, to Tim and Esther Miller, Dundee, Ohio.

Miller, Grace Ann, Nov. 20, to Lee and Kristen Hoffman Miller, Middletown, Va.

Mintenko, Olivia Brianne, Oct. 23, to John and Dayle Friesen Mintenko, Altona, Man.

Murphy, Jacob Wendell, Nov. 19, to Michael and Denise Clemens Murphy, South Bend, Ind.

Oberholtzer Hess, Lucas Samuel, Aug. 18, to Fred Oberholtzer and Audrey Hess, Gettysburg, Pa.

SantaMaria, Danielle Susanne and Thomas Joseph (twins), Nov. 23, to Tom and Sherry Detweiler SantaMaria, Phoenixville, Pa.

Schroeder Kipfer, Julia Ruth Grace, Nov. 22, to Bryan and Anita Schroeder Kipfer, Plattsville, Ont.

Stellhorn, Cailin Aubrey, Oct. 31, to Steve Stellhorn and Jenny Waidelich, Wauseon, Ohio.

Stutzman, Mallory Alexis, Nov. 15, to Rodrick and Jill McKean Stutzman, Berlin, Ohio.

Umble, Natalie, Dec. 8, to Randy and Melanie Umble, Quito, Ecuador.

Verwey, Haley Natasha, Sept. 29, to Christopher and Heather Schmidt Verwey, Ayr, Ont.

Wahl, Dayna Grace, Oct. 8, to Ryan and Rachel Klippenstein Wahl, Altona, Man.

Weaver, Jameson Michael, Nov. 4, to Michael and Rachel Brubacher Weaver, Harrisonburg, Va.

Windham, Elizabeth Marie, Oct. 22, to Dave and Joni Yoder Windham, Hartville, Ohio.

Wyatt, Sean Daniel, Nov. 4, to Dan Wyatt and Angela Randolph, Stuarts Draft, Va.

Zercher, Jack Charles, Nov. 12, to Charlie and Trischa Speicher Zercher, Elkhart, Ind.

MARRIAGES

Beachy/Miller: Rebecca Beachy, Kalona, Iowa, and Tom Miller, Kalona, Oct. 29 at East Union Mennonite Church, Kalona.

Blum/Waggle: Joshua Blum, Telford, Pa., and Amy Lynn Waggle, Telford, Oct. 29 at Souderton (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Fisher/Kirby: Daniel Thebo Fisher, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Melissa Lynn Kirby, New York, N.Y., Sept. 4 at Swift Level Favan, Lewisburg, W.V.

Hoke/Mast: Emma Hoke, Wooster, Ohio, and Elvin Mast, Wooster, Oct. 8 in Orrville, Ohio.

Houle/Sawatzky: Gabrielle Houle, Altona, Man., and Kevin Sawatzky, Altona, Oct. 8 at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Schneider/Vogts: Jeremy Schneider, Phoenix, Ariz., and Elizabeth Vogts, Buhler, Kan., Nov. 26 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Shoup/Zimmerly: Art Shoup, Orrville, Ohio, and Velma Zimmerly, Sterling, Ohio, Sept. 24 in Sterling.

DEATHS

Arbogast, Olie M., 94, Harrisonburg, Va., died Oct. 17. Spouse: Elsa Yoder Arbogast. Parents: Robert and Della Vance Arbogast. Foster child: David Thompson; four grandchildren; one great-grandchild. Funeral: Oct. 21 at Lindale (Va.) Mennonite Church.

Beachy, Aurelia Kipfer, 76, Corfu, N.Y., died Sept. 3 of a stroke. Spouse: Calvin Beachy. Parents: Amos and Rebecca Lichti Kipfer. Children: Tom, Marcia Kauffman, Ginny Liechty, Jim; 13 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 7 at Alden (N.Y.) Mennonite Church.

"For The Record" lists obituaries for those who died during the past three months. Additional information about the deceased may be submitted to *The Mennonite* at www.TheMennonite.org. We will forward all information to MennObits, the research Web site sponsored by the Historical Committee of Mennonite Church USA. To receive the obituary form as an MS Word document, email Editor@themennonite.org.

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EUROPEAN HERITAGE (July 5-20)
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Birky, Erma L., Detroit Lakes, Minn., died Nov. 4. Spouse: Glen Birky. Children: Margaret Brubacher, Stanley, Carol Erb, David, Mary Jean Sweigart; 17 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 8 at Lake Region Mennonite Church, Detroit Lakes.

Brubaker, Christian H., 90, New Holland, Pa., died Nov. 9. Spouse: Martha Wagner Brubaker. Parents: Christian H. and Anna Herr Brubaker. Children: Brooks C., Pamela J. Reich; three grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 13 at Akron (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Burkhart, Gladys, 95, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 15. Parents: Eli and Fannie Bare Burkhart. Funeral: Nov. 17 at College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Dick, Frank L., 99, Buhler, Kan., died Nov. 12. Spouse: Hilda Ratzlaff Dick (deceased). Parents: John A. and Elizabeth Neufeld Dick. Children: Larry A., Norman L.; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 16 at Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, Inman, Kan.

Freed, Melvin H., 93, Souderton, Pa., died Nov. 14. Spouse: Edith M. Willouer Freed (deceased). Parents: Oswin and Mary Ann Hackman Freed. Children: Mary Cassel, Floyd, Henry, Arlin, Glenn, Laverne, Ray; 26 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 19 at Souderton Mennonite Homes.

Friesen, Nellie, 78, Altona, Man., died Oct. 22. Spouse: John H. Friesen (deceased). Parents: Peter D. and Susan Hiebert Wiebe. Children: Dorothy, Laura Schmidt, Stanley, Albert, Gordon, Joan Giguere, Wesley; 16 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 25 at Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Altona.

Garber, Jane Slabaugh, 56, Goshen, Ind., died Nov. 10. Spouse: Jerry Garber. Parents: Paul and Grace Martin Slabaugh. Children: Joshua, Jordan. Funeral: Nov. 14 at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Goering, Velma Mildred Kaufman, 92, Colorado Springs, Colo., died Oct. 29. Spouse: Alfred J. Goering (deceased). Parents: Benjamin and Matilda Kaufman. Children: Jeri Rodrick, Deanna Houser, Don; nine grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 19 in McPherson, Kan.

Good, Ray G., 63, Manheim, Pa., died Nov. 26. Spouse: Harriet H. Good. Parents: Arthur G. and Esther M. Good. Children: Carol Ann Burns, Calvin R., Cathleen M. Osgood, Cheryl L. Marshall, Conrad A., Clinton H.; 15 grandchildren. Memoiral service: Dec. 3 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Graber, Lawrence Ed, 90, Pretty Prairie, Kan., died Nov. 24. Spouse: Elsie Juhnke Graber. Parents: Peter and Anna Schwartz Graber. Children: Barbara Ann McGowan, Bernice Jo Rutz, Myron; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 26 at First Mennonite Church of Pretty Prairie.

Groff, Fern Louine Shetter, 87, Colorado Springs, Colo., died Aug. 26. Spouse: Robert J. Groff. Parents: Peter and Elizabeth Shetter. Children: Harold, Carolyn Kanop; two grandchildren; two great-grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 31 at Beth-El Mennonite Church, Colorado Springs.

Hildebrand, Hugo, 81, Arvada, Colo., died Oct. 27 of cancer. Spouse: Donna Balzer Eichorn Hildebrand. Children: Jeanne Hildebrand Slyngstad, Shari Whorter; stepchild: Donald; six grandchildren. Memorial service: Nov. 2 at Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

Hoover, V. Emanuel, 93, Kinzers, Pa., died Sept. 15. Spouse: Edith Heller Hoover. Parents: Amos and Anna Keneagy Hoover. Children: Harlan H., L. Eugene, Sharyn F. Habecker, Rhoda C. Jabbour; nine grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Sept. 19 at Kinzer Mennonite Church.

Kreider, Lester H., 84, Lancaster, Pa., died Nov. 9. Spouse: Mildred Myers Kreider. Children: Donald L., Sylvia J., David M.; three grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 12 in Lancaster.

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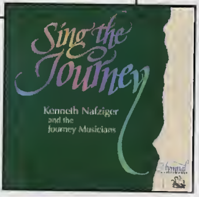

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Landis, Faith Miriam, 66, Lititz, Pa., died Nov. 6. Parents: Ira D. and Mabel Book Landis. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Landis Homes, Lancaster, Pa.

Landis, Konnie Lynette, 36, Everett, Wash., died June 20. Spouse: William Sutherland. Parents: R. Laverne and E. Jean Mack Landis. Funeral: June 25 at Seattle (Wash.) Mennonite Church.

Landis, Martha Trauger, 89, Harleysville, Pa., died Oct. 31. Spouse: Titus W. Landis (deceased). Parents: Samuel and Lizzie Trauger. Children: Linford D., Dorothy L. Lightcap; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 4 at Sadler-Suess Funeral Home, Telford, Pa.

Landis, Ralph C., 68, Wadsworth, Ohio, died Aug. 11. Spouse: Shirley A. Veney Landis. Parents: Clarence and Marjorie Rohrer Landis. Children: Diann King, Joyce Byler, Brian; five grandchildren. Funeral: Aug. 18 at Bethel Mennonite Church, Rittman, Ohio.

Oswald, Barbara Ellen Schweitzer, 94, Sturgis, Mich., died Nov. 1. Spouse: Paul Oswald (deceased). Children: Sharon Schrock, Mattie Miller, Richard; nine grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild. Funeral: Nov. 5 at Locust Grove Mennonite Church, Burr Oak, Mich.

Roth, Thomas L., 60, Archbold, Ohio, died Nov. 22. Spouse: Sally Short Roth. Parents: Glen and Wilma Stamm Roth. Children: Corey, Carrie Kruse, Christian. Funeral: Nov. 26 at Lockport Mennonite Church, Stryker, Ohio.

Steffy, Mildred Hershey, 83, Manheim, Pa., died Nov. 11. Spouse: Allan J. Steffy. Parents: Willis H. and Ruth H. Hershey. Children: Herbert L., Nelson P., Karl E., Margaret R. Brewer, Roger L., Cynthia J. Stayrook; 13 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 16 at East Petersburg (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Stucky, Harold J., 85, North Newton, Kan., died Nov. 11. Spouse: Ruby Voth Stucky. Parents: Julius and Olga Krehbiel Stucky. Children: Steven, Franklin, Nathan, Rita; 11 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 15 at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton.

Stutzman, Arthur, 90, Wellman, Iowa, died Nov. 7. Parents: William and Barbara Gascho Stutzman. Funeral: Nov. 10 at Wellman Mennonite Church.

Umble, John M., 87, Atglen, Pa., died Oct. 11. Spouse: Susanna Kurtz Umble. Parents: John G. and Ada S. Kauffman Umble. Children: Dorthy Leatherman, Nancy Walker, Richard, Allen, Sandy Lusby; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 15 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Atglen.

Weirich, Eli S., 75, Shipshewana, Ind., died Oct. 25. Spouse: Ruth Weirich (deceased). Parents: Samuel E. and Millie Bontrager Weirich. Children: James, David, Robert; 10 grandchildren. Funeral: Oct. 29 at First Mennonite Church, Middlebury, Ind.

Wile, Jacob L., 78, Harleysville, Pa., died Nov. 16. Spouse: Marian R. Wile. Parents: Jacob S. and Mary Landis Wile. Children: Linda Gacy, Kenneth; four grandchildren. Funeral: Nov. 21 at Franconia (Pa.) Mennonite Church.

Yoder, Aden E., 60, Middlebury, Ind., died Nov. 9 in an automobile accident. Spouse: Velma Yoder. Parents: Ervin and Iva Schlabach Yoder. Spouse: Nov. 12 at Shore Mennonite Church, Shipshewana, Ind.

Yoder, Faye L., 75, Belleville, Pa., died Oct. 23. Parents: Jesse W. and Blanche E. Kauffman Yoder. Funeral: Oct. 27 at Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Belleville.

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West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship seeks a ***3/4-time interim pastor*** starting January 2006 while we search for a full-time pastor. We are a 20-year-old congregation in the University City area of Philadelphia, attracting students from local universities and people from diverse households, many within walking distance of the meeting place. Average Sunday attendance is 80. For more information contact Lenny Thompson at lennythompson1@juno.com, 215-683-4152 or 215-849-5119. Church Web site: wpmf.com.

Holly Grove Mennonite and Rehoboth Presbyterian Churches, Westover, Md., seek candidates for the position of ***full-time youth pastor***. These two churches have been jointly supporting one youth pastor for the past six years and desire to continue that relationship. The youth pastor will facilitate and oversee the continuation of an established community youth ministry to high school students. Candidates should have a growing passion for their Christian faith, respect for working in an ecumenical environment, love of youth and the ability to work in a team ministry. Salary package in keeping with Mennonite Church USA guidelines. Experience in youth ministry preferred. Interested people should send resumé and cover letter to Verle Brubaker, 7333 Mennonite Church Road, Westover, MD 21871.

Bluffton University invites applications for a ***full-time, tenure-track faculty position in early childhood*** (generalist) beginning fall semester 2006. Doctorate preferred; ABD considered. Certification in early childhood education (Pre K-3). Academic preparation in educational foundations preferred. Academic preparation in literacy desirable. Experience: minimum of three years teaching in an early childhood classroom, higher education teaching experience preferred. Responsibilities: teach undergraduate education courses in curriculum and instruction in early childhood education and possibly literacy. Teach undergraduate and graduate courses in education foundations. Advise early childhood candidates. Supervise clinical practitioners in early education classrooms. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Review of applications begins immediately and continues until an appointment is made. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See http://www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in the liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Hesston College seeks a ***chief academic officer*** to replace Dr. Marc Yoder, who is retiring. Qualifications include commitment to Anabaptist distinctives, understanding of and commitment to the mission of Hesston College as the two-year college of Mennonite Church USA with both transfer and professional programs, completed doctorate and demonstrated ability to lead collaboratively with faculty and other areas of campus. Beginning date: July 1, 2006. Review of applications and interviews begins Feb. 1 and continues until position is filled. Send letter of application, vita and original transcripts to President's Office, Hesston College, Box 3000, Hesston, KS 67062. For more information, email cindyl@hesston.edu. Hesston College is an equal opportunity employer.

Full-time associate pastor: **St. John Mennonite Church** in Pandora, Ohio, is looking for a full-time associate pastor to lead staff and laypeople in a large ministry-based church of over 600. The duties include implementing vision statement in ministry areas, develop and execute annual ministry plan, provide accountability for ministry team members, encourage and raise up new leaders from within the church body for specific ministry teams. Looking for someone gifted in these areas: administration/leadership, ministry/serving, pastoring/shepherding, teaching and wisdom. Master's of theology and/or experience in church/para-church administration highly desired. Profile of congregation and vision statement available upon request. Applicants may apply to Mark Yoder at myoder@wcoil.com or call the church office: 419-384-3680.

Eastern Mennonite University is seeking qualified applicants for the position of ***director of marketing services***. Responsibilities include preparing and implementing an integrated marketing communications plan for the university including Web-based media, branding, news dissemination, crisis communications management, budget planning, scheduling of work, assurance of quality control, long-range planning and staff supervision. Bachelor's degree in marketing, communication or equivalent experience required. At least five years in one or more of the following fields is required: Web expertise, mass media communications, marketing, publishing, graphic design, public relations or related areas. For more information visit our Web site at www.emu.edu. Send letter of application, resumé and three references to Human Resources Office, Eastern Mennonite University, 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802 or email at hr@emu.edu. The search committee will begin reviewing applications immediately. The search will continue until the position is filled.

Full-time senior pastor: **St. John Mennonite Church** in Pandora, Ohio, is looking for a senior pastor to shepherd a congregation of over 600 and to implement the vision statement set forth before the church. Direct duties include preaching, overseeing worship and prayer. Searching for someone gifted in these areas: pastoring/shepherding, exhortation, teaching and administration. Master's of theology, pastoral experience in a multistaffed church of 10 years plus highly desired. Profile of congregation and vision statement available upon request. Applicants may apply to Mark Yoder at myoder@wcoil.com or call the church office 419-384-3680.

Spruce Lake Retreat, a thriving, multifaceted retreat center affiliated with the Mennonite church, seeks a committed Christian for the key position of ***housekeeping manager***, to oversee all cleaning operations plus housekeeping, laundry and custodial staff. Applicant must have excellent communication skills, experience in hospitality, cleaning operations, supervision, scheduling and basic computer skills. Salary and liberal benefits package provided commensurate with training/experience. On-camp housing may be available. Located in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania; visit www.sprucelake.org. Send resumé to Director of Operations, Spruce Lake Retreat, RR 1, Box 605, Canadensis, PA 18325; phone 800-822-7505, ext. 118; fax 570-595-0328; email operations@sprucelake.org.

Hinkletown Mennonite School is seeking a ***visionary administrator*** to lead the school into a new era of providing a Christian education to students in northeastern Lancaster County, Pa. HMS is a K-8 school that offers a quality academic education within the context of an Anabaptist interpretation of the Christian faith. Interested people are invited to contact Kristine Sauder by Feb. 1, 2006. Please address communications to 464 E. Maple Grove Road, Narvon, PA 17555. Phone 717-445-9215 or email ksauder@frontiernet.net.

Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership is inviting applications for the full-time position of ***director of the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee***. The director will provide overall coordination and direction to the heritage and history work of the Historical Committee and develop program and vision that will enhance the life and spirit of Mennonite Church USA.

Responsibilities include interpreting and telling the church's story, initiating and coordinating history and heritage programs, fund raising, supervising staff and archives operations in Goshen, Ind., and in North Newton, Kan., managing a budget, networking with regional heritage organizations and overseeing/editing the *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*.

Qualifications: commitment to Mennonite Church USA and its mission; passion for the church's stories; visionary; storytelling ability, strong communication skills, in person and through writing; management and supervisory skills; fund-raising experience/ability or willingness to learn; ability to inspire and motivate; equally at home with the various heritage streams and ethnic/racial groups of Mennonite Church USA.

Send resumé with references to Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee and Archives, 1700 S. Main St., Goshen IN 46526.

Interviews will begin Feb. 1, 2006, until the position is filled.

Central Christian School, located in Kidron, Ohio, is seeking a ***new lead administrator***. Central Christian is committed to achieving each of its five distinctive goals: teaching biblical values, practicing Christian discipleship, creating a Christ-centered community, promoting academic excellence and encouraging a faith commitment to Christ and the church. Candidates should possess the following qualities: faithfully committed to the Anabaptist-Mennonite understanding of Christianity; called and gifted to be a visionary and progressive spiritual leader of a community of faculty, staff and students; believes in the mission of Central Christian School and works with the supportive constituency of the churches, business community, families of students and local communities to achieve that mission; a master's degree in an education-related field.

Central Christian School employs 42 full-time faculty and supporting staff people, with recent enrollment of 314 in grades Pre-K through 12. Each faculty and staff contributes ideas and perspectives that assist the Board of Trustees in developing the school's educational and spiritual strengths.

Central Christian School invites qualified applicants who are excited about serving in this broad range of opportunities as a leader. Responsibility should begin by July 2006.

Additional information can be found at http://www.centralchristian.k12.oh.us/. Nominations and/or letters of application with resumé may be submitted by email to leadership-search@centralchristian-school.com or by mail to Shirley Hochstetler, P.O. Box 136, Kidron, OH 44636. CCS is an equal opportunity employer.

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School seeks applicants for the following position beginning August 2006: ***physics/physical science instructor***. Send resumé to Elaine A. Moyer, Principal, Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, 1000 Forty Foot Road, Lansdale, PA 19446; fax 215-362-2943; email eamoyer@christopherdock.org

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Tabor College seeks ***full-time faculty*** starting August 2006 for positions in psychology, Bible, secondary teacher education, athletic training program director and sociology/social work. Doctorates preferred. Passion for mentoring and advising undergraduate majors. Must affirm Tabor distinctives as an Anabaptist Evangelical Christian college and articulate personal Christian commitment. Complete position listings at http://www.tabor.edu. Send a letter of interest to Dr. Lawrence Ressler, VP of Academics, Tabor College, 400 S. Jefferson, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

Bluffton University invites applications for a ***full-time, tenure-track position in economics*** beginning fall semester 2006. Academic preparation in economics or a closely related field, such as political economy, economic systems, economic history or international development. An understanding of both mainstream and alternative economic paradigms is highly desirable. A terminal (Ph.D. or functional equivalent) will be required for tenure. Completing this degree after employment is acceptable. Demonstrated competence in teaching is essential. Responsibilities include teaching undergraduate economics and economics-related courses, as well as courses in the graduate program in business. The economics major is lodged within the department of Economics, Business Administration and Accounting and is one component of a values-based liberal arts curriculum. Compensation is commensurate with education and experience within the university pay scale. Review of applications begins Jan. 15 and continues until an appointment is made. Send letter of interest, vita, three letters of reference (submitted directly from referee or if necessary from placement office) and official transcripts to Elaine Suderman, Academic Affairs, Bluffton University, 1 University Drive, Bluffton, OH 45817-2104. See http://www.bluffton.edu. Bluffton University welcomes applications from all academically qualified people who respect the Anabaptist-Mennonite peace church tradition and endorse Christian higher education in the liberal arts environment. Members of underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. EOE.

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The elusive monster

Gordon Houser

Many of us wring our hands and speak out against our consumer culture, then continue to live under its influence. We end up feeling resentful and ineffectual.

Getting a handle on the monster (or one of what the Bible calls the "powers") that is consumer culture is difficult because that monster is so elusive. *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* by Vincent J. Miller (Continuum, 2004, $24.95) helps us do just that.

Miller is particularly interested in how religion relates to consumer culture, which is not a culture but "a set of interpretive habits and dispositions supported by a variety of practices and infrastructures" that apply to any culture. One of these habits is to treat "beliefs, symbols and practices as abstract commodities that are readily separable from their traditional contexts."

An example from a Mennonite context might be quilts, created over many hours by people within a Mennonite community but treated by others as objects of beauty to be enjoyed by individuals who purchase them.

It is common to criticize consumer culture as narcissistic and greedy, but it is more subtle than that. It is ambiguous and seductive. "The real problem with consumer culture," Miller writes, "lies in the structures and practices that systematically confuse and misdirect well-intentioned people seeking to do good things such as show solidarity with others, find spiritual transformation and practice their sincerely held religious beliefs." He explores such structures, related to labor, the single-family home, marketing and corporate popular culture.

The problem is not simply consumerism against Christianity. "Consumer culture forms people in consumerist habits" that believers "bring to their religious beliefs and practice."

Many of us proclaim certain beliefs, then fail to act on them when they impinge on our lives. Miller mentions students of his who "eagerly absorb the most radical reconstructions of Jesus' politics, the preferential option for the poor, and Catholic social teaching—all of which their life plans preclude them from acting upon."

Countering such a huge problem is an uphill battle, to say the least. But Miller does more than describe the problem. He presents tactics for countering the commodification of culture. One tactic is simply to learn where and under what conditions the things we consume are made. Take, for example, bananas. They travel thousands of miles to tables, which consumes significant amounts of marine and jet fuel. Banana plantations have moved to Ecuador, which has few protections for organized labor. All this makes the low price we pay for bananas less attractive. But more important, learning this helps fight the commodification of culture by "training our imagination to consider such connections between cultural objects and their originating traditions."

Theology, Miller writes, must help people connect their beliefs and their traditions with their daily life. One way is to help "the community clarify its own experience and to relate it to the experience of other communities past and present." Such tactics must "swim against a massive cultural tide of commodification" and are "the art of the weak."

Miller's book is important to us all, but it is addressed primarily to an academic audience. A more accessible yet more simplistic book is *On Earth as in Advertising? Moving from Commercial Hype to Gospel Hope* by Sam Van Eman (Brazos Press, 2005, $14.99). He encourages readers to "enter the media world with a discerning mind."

I'm afraid consumer culture is such an insidious reality that we'll need all our communal discernment to counter its effects. Arguing ideology won't cut it. We must change our practices. As Miller writes, we are in "a moment of both great opportunity and risk, of potential grace and evil."

FILMS

Good Night and Good Luck (PG) goes back to the early 1950s, when CBS's Edward R. Murrow criticized Senator Joseph McCarthy's accusations of people being Communists. Shot in black and white and using actual footage of McCarthy, it captures that period and its fear-mongering. But it also speaks strongly to our current climate of fear and shows how little our mainstream media stand up to similar attacks.

Capote (R) is perhaps the best film made about a writer, in this case Truman Capote and his creation of his seminal nonfiction novel *In Cold Blood*. It shows that a writer is both honest and manipulative, seeking to make the work the best it can be. Philip Seymour Hoffman's performance is one of the best of this or any year.

Paradise Now (PG-13) is a Palestinian film about two friends in the West Bank who are recruited to be suicide bombers. Without justifying their actions, the film helps us understand the context in which they live. While it is a bit contrived, the story is heart wrenching and the acting superb.

BOOKS

A Culture of Peace: God's Vision for the Church by Alan Kreider, Eleanor Kreider and Paulus Widjaja (Good Books, 2005, $9.99) is an accessible book ideal for Sunday school classes. The authors—two U.S. Mennonite mission workers and an Indonesian Mennonite theologian—call for letting peace shape our identity. They offer both a vision and practical suggestions, relating peace to worship, the workplace and evangelism.

Getting in the Way: Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams, edited by Tricia Gates Brown (Herald Press, 2005, $17.99), includes stories about CPT's work in Iraq, Canada, Hebron, Haiti, Mexico and Colombia. Informative and inspiring, it includes photos.

DVDS

Me and You and Everyone We Know (R) follows lonely characters and their search for connection. A performance artist stalks a shoe salesman recently separated from his wife. While it plays with taboos, the tone is humorous and painful yet always gentle.

Those of us who bring you TheMennonite wish you God's richest blessings during this season of hope and light.

Left to right: Dee Birkey (designer), Gordon Houser (associate editor), Rebecca Helmuth (circulation manager), Everett Thomas (editor), Kristene Miller (advertising coordinator) Not pictured: Nora Miller (proofreader) and Martha Graber (reads The Mennonite on audio cassettes).

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Everett J. Thomas

The angels' song

Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong,
and warring humankind hears not
the tidings which they bring.
O hush the noise and cease the strife
and hear the angels sing.
"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

The world has suffered too much in the past 12 months; unrelenting news about tsunamis, hurricanes, wars, pandemics and terrorism blocks out the heavenly hymn. But Christmas is the time to hush such noise so we can hear the angels' song.

"Peace on the earth, good will to all from heaven's gracious king," Edmund H. Sears wrote in 1849 to capture the angels' words in Luke 2.

Christmas reminds us that the Creator of the universe wishes us peace and contentment. But how do we receive such a greeting when the world is at war and nature terrorizes us?

It is wrong to ignore the tragedies around us and blot out the ugliness just so we can have a comfortable holiday season. But it also is wrong to let the press of bad news obscure this season to celebrate God coming to us in physical form.

So in one hand we hold the ugliness and suffering in our world, and in the other hand we hold God's body—a newborn infant listening to the angels as they welcome him.

If we quiet ourselves we can hear the angels' song above the death and destruction left by the tsunami of nearly a year ago.

If we silence ourselves, we can hear the angels' song above Hurricane Katrina—and all the hurricanes of this record year—that left so many physical, emotional and spiritual scars within survivors and within our country.

If we hush ourselves, we can hear the angels' song above the pandemic caused by the HIV/AIDS virus sweeping across Africa.

When we calm ourselves, we can hear the angels' song above the earthquake-ravaged villages of Kashmir.

When we quiet ourselves, we hear the angels' song above the genocide barely constrained by a peace accord in the Darfur regions of western and southern Sudan.

When we silence ourselves, we hear the angels' song above the detonations of car bombs and chaos of suicide bombers in the Middle East—and the fear we carry for Christian Peacemaker Teams members abducted in Iraq.

When we hush ourselves, we hear the angels' song above the pain in families we know and the heartbreak hiding in our congregations.

"Peace on earth, good will to all from heaven's gracious king," comes the heavenly hymn.

The angels sing because God came to be physically present with us in the midst of our suffering—and did so in a form so vulnerable and innocent that only those willing to accept this first Christmas gift can hear the hymn. God still sings to a world full of sin and strife, and the words have not changed: on earth peace.—*Editor*

Note: The next issue of *The Mennonite* will be dated Jan. 10, 2006.

New printer in 2006

This is the last issue of *The Mennonite* to be mailed from Mennonite Publishing Network's facility in Scottdale, Pa. Because we are changing from Heeter Printing Company, located nearby at Southpointe, to IPC Print Services in St. Joseph, Mich., the magazine will be mailed from southern Michigan beginning with the Jan. 10, 2006, issue.

We are making this change for several reasons. First, IPC—which specializes in magazines and prints some 450—will be more economical for us. Second, we will be mailing from a location closer to the center of our subscriber base. Third, making this change now—with the possibility that the "MPH" facility at 616 Walnut Avenue could be sold at any time—means we can make the transition according to our schedule rather than to that of a new owner's.

Mailing of *The Mennonite* from Scottdale is the last service MPN provided to us. We are grateful for the service of our colleagues there who so faithfully mailed the magazine twice each month. Thank you.—*Editor*

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